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Morey's Piers celebrates 50th anniversary

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
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WILDWOOD, N.J. — It started with a slide. Five decades later, three piers that include two waterparks (with 22 waterslides) and 73 rides have defined the city of Wildwood to thousands if not millions of shore goers.

"In attempting to describe this place, we like to say we are forged by sand, sea, sunbeams and American dreams, and that our family has been handcrafting Morey's Piers through five decades and three generations," said **Jack Morey**, co-owner. "It brings us great joy to see the generations of families that come to visit each summer, making memories to last a lifetime."

In 1969, the Morey name was not recognized as it is today. If anything, the family's business in hotels and motels is what would have been associated with a Morey's mention, if known at all. Brothers **Will and Bill Morey** happened to notice something new in trendy recreation while at a shopping center in Florida. Taken with the crowd reaction to a big slide, the pair surmised it could be popular at their home in New Jersey. Having acquired two strips of beach real estate in North Wildwood in 1969 for what was then an exorbitant price, the Wipe Out slide was built and became a summer sensation. And a beginning.

During the 1970s, there were several amusement piers decorating Wildwood's beachfront. The Morey upstarts were most likely not considered to be any significant competition. Expanding the pier around the slide, the Morey brothers added

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For half a century, Morey's Piers has helped define the city of Wildwood and the summer beach experience.
COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS

The sails on Buzzsaw resemble a large saw blade.
COURTESY ARM

ARM supplies flashy swing ride to Branson Strip

Branson Sawmill adds Buzzsaw attraction

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
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BRANSON, Mo. — Fun is thriving in southern Missouri. Area attractions near and on Table Rock Lake are boosting tourist options with new activities, entertainment and rides.

The bustling Branson Strip has a new iconic eye-catcher. **The Branson Sawmill** has installed the latest swing ride from **ARM** Named Buzzsaw, the high-flying ride helps the facility develop itself under a new name. Under the operation of **FACE Amusement**, the parcel of real estate first welcomed guests in 2017 as **The Branson Coaster.** Using the dramatic elevation change at the back of the property, a **Wiegand** alpine coaster traveled down the valley not once, but twice by incorporating two lifts. Now the property is expanding into an entertainment center and has chosen a logger theme.

"It's a hearkening back to the history of the Ozarks and the loggers," said **Rosemary Rose**, COO, FACE Amusement. "It goes back to everyone who settled the area."

Toby Turner, uniquely called head coach instead of general manager, oversees operations at The Branson Sawmill.

"The sails on the ride resemble a saw blade," said Turner. "The places where people hold loose articles are shaped like stumps."

Along with the theme come characters and mascots. Sawmill Sam and Sally are pioneers, joined by their lumberjack friend Bucksaw Bob. Reuben the Raccoon and Henry the Hound are known to create a little mischief.

Turner reports that the ride opened the first week of June. Buzzsaw stands 123 feet tall and transports 24 passengers at a time. Hourly capacity is capable of 460 riders per hour.

▸ See BUZZSAW, page 4

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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

***AT* NOTEBOOK:** *Tim Baldwin, tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com*

Human connection

Baldwin

I was reminded recently of an experience I had a couple years ago that stuck with me. While visiting Fiesta Texas, the staff member at the gate called me by my name after scanning my pass at the entrance, welcoming me and telling me to have a great day. I was so taken aback. I had never been called by my name. Ever. I'm sure the employee had no idea what an impact she had made on my visit, but she had. I felt like a person, not a pass holder — or worse, a barcode.

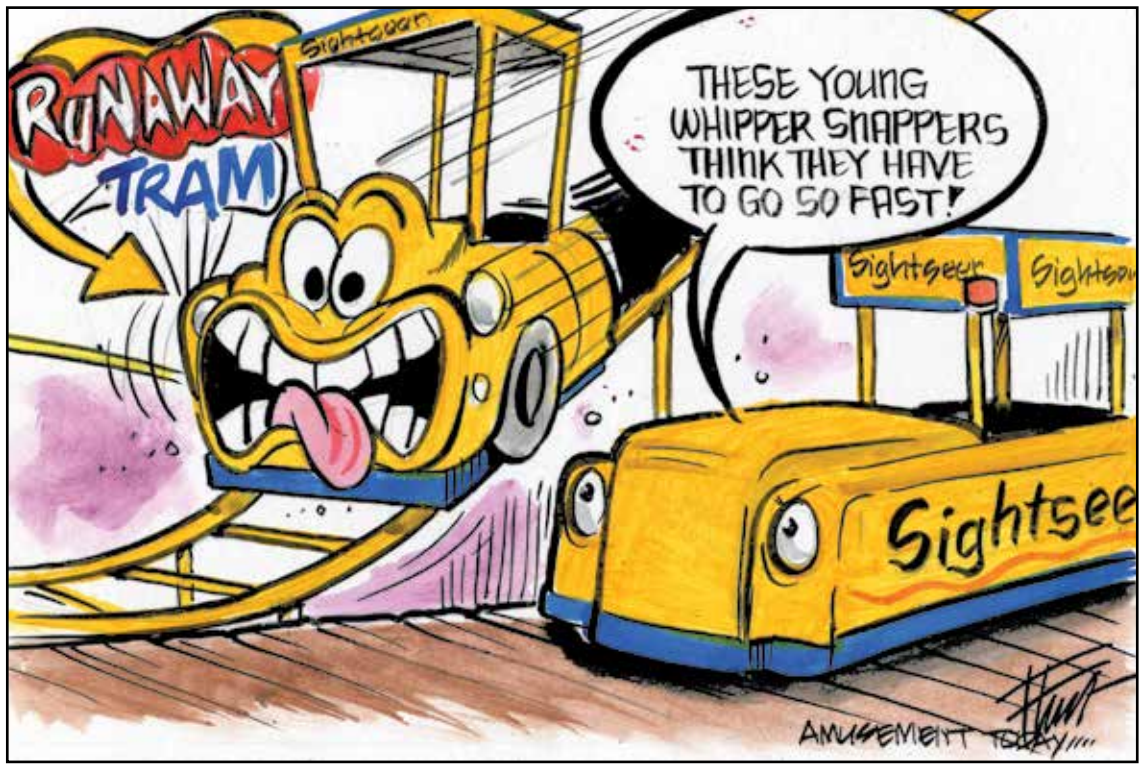
On recent visits to my local park, I have noticed the performers from the Six Flags Over Texas gunfight show talking to people in the walkways, interacting and asking about their day. Invariably, the guests want to pose for pictures with them. I know in the Texas heat — and dressed in full Western wear — these performers would be much more comfortable in some air conditioning, but the impact they make interacting with the guests is probably immeasurable.

Nowadays, parks seem to be chasing the latest app. Yes, those can offer convenience and certainly serve a purpose. Sometimes, though, I wonder if the human connection resonates with the guests far more than just staring at their phones during their visit. It seems shared experiences with family and friends are what made amusement parks and theme parks so popular to begin with.

A recent situation was publicized when an autistic child had a severe meltdown while at Universal in Orlando. A quick-thinking staff member comforted the child by laying next to him, calming him from his episode. It made such an impression, it went viral. It's a much better impression than someone scanning my pass and saying, "You're good." That happens quite a bit.

I've heard several parks comment how challenging staffing is with the U.S. economy being so incredibly strong. It's harder to get the "cream of the crop" employees nowadays. Perhaps it is time to stop, take note, and circle back to teaching young staff members to exemplify those touchstones of the guest experience. Post instructions in employee areas to call pass holders by name. Be on the lookout for people looking at park maps and offer to guide them toward where they want to be. Make it a mission to high five young children as they walk the park. It's amazing how much more rewarding the employee's outlook on his or her job will be, in addition to the guest feeling more welcome.

FLINT'S VIEW: *Bubba Flint*



INDUSTRY OPINION: *Dean Lamanna, dlamanna@amusementtoday.com*

Of 'Star Wars' and wish fulfillment

Lamanna

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge debuted at Disneyland in May. As Disney prepares the Aug. 29 roll-out of the land's second location at Walt Disney World Resort, I'm offering my own *Star Wars* semi-fan's experience of the concept.

Admittedly, I never fully bought into the Force. I saw *Star Wars* exactly once upon its release in 1977 and paid admission to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* three times that same year. Although mildly entertained by the exploits of Luke Skywalker, Han Solo and Princess Leia, I preferred my science fiction a little more grounded, thanks.

Galaxy's Edge has stirred considerable online debate, along with the inevitable comparisons to Universal Studios' *Harry Potter*-inspired lands. Some valid criticisms have been presented. But it's hard to imagine how Galaxy's Edge could have completely lived up to 42 years of fan expectations and five years of theme park marketing hype.

Disney, as it always does, will work out the kinks. In the meantime, there's the Millennium Falcon in stunning, gritty, life-size glory. And more colorful merchandise than any hardcore Star Warrior could have dreamed of growing up.

Galaxy's Edge, at this stage — beyond the very act of stepping into it, and months before the arrival of its second major attraction, Rise of the Resistance — is less about instant gratification than absorption. Its considerable pleasures lie in its architecture and ambience, the exotically festive environment of Oga's Cantina, and the marvelously hands-on droid and lightsaber workshops. One's level of appreciation may be generational: baby boomers (like myself) and gen-X'ers, I suspect, are more likely to admire it holistically.

We who report on this industry have an intimate appreciation for all of the folks who make the magic. But here's a special shout-out to the teams at Walt Disney Imagineering and Lucasfilm for honoring the *Star Wars* fandom, and franchise, by putting in the research and minding the details, and for creating a new platform for evolving a beloved mythology. And yes, for making new fans.

In the best Disney theme park tradition, Galaxy's Edge is an impressive work in progress — with even greater promise.

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columinst(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

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2 MINUTE DRILL

AT: Janice Witherow

Paul Norton, Silverwood Theme Park

Paul Norton (fourth from left) shows off his Seattle Seahawks fandom with pride alongside the team mascot, cheerleaders and players just outside the gates of Silverwood Theme Park. COURTESY SILVERWOOD THEME PARK

Paul Norton has been involved in the family business, **Silverwood Theme Park** in Idaho, since age 12 when he had the enviable job of touring and researching amusement parks around the country with his father, **Gary Norton**, Silverwood's founder. He has held several positions at the park over the years and did a stint at the **Bellagio Hotel and Casino** in Las Vegas to hone his customer service and organizational skills. Today, Paul serves as general manager of Silverwood, keeping the family legacy alive and well. He has been an involved member of the governor-appointed **Idaho Travel Council** and is currently on **IAAPA**'s board of directors. A golf fan, Paul enjoys hitting the links when away from work.

Title: General Manager.

Number of years in the industry:
31 years. I started at the age of 12 working in the Main St. Theater at Silverwood when my father opened the park in 1988.

Best thing about the industry:
Selling fun family memories.

Favorite amusement ride:
Wooden roller coasters.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be … Working elsewhere in the hospitality industry.

Biggest challenge facing our industry:
Trying to meet our evolving guests' needs and expectations.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is …
That it goes by fast!

Favorite childhood TV show: *G.I. Joe.*

If you could learn something new tomorrow and succeed at it for life what would it be? To fix my golf swing.

Favorite sport to play: Golf.

What would you say is a big waste of time? Scanning MSN or Yahoo and seeing 5 to 10 news stories on the Kardashians.

This always makes me smile …
My 5-year-old son's laughter.

The most comfortable place in my home is … Sleeping in my bed.

When it comes to pizza, I usually order …
The combination.

My favorite summertime drink is …
A juicy IPA (beer).

The best thing about living in Idaho is …
If I say what is best, I think too many people will want to move here.

What would you rather give up … your television or your computer?
Since I can watch the new *Stranger Things* on my computer, I would give up my TV.

The yuckiest thing I have ever eaten is …
I am kind of embarrassed to say. After a night of drinking in Taipei and sampling all the interesting food in a night market, I found a mystery meat deep-fried on a stick.

Which do you usually listen to, your head or your heart?
It is riskier, but a little more with my heart.

What topic makes your brain ache?
Anything that has to do with raising minimum wage.

What recent news event has really left an impression on you?
I'm having a hard time determining real or "Fake News" these days.

What month of the year best describes who you are? September.

My next vacation will be …
Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Rounding third and heading for home

Members of *Amusement Today*'s staff met-up in Cincinnati to take in a baseball game at Great American Ballpark between the Texas Rangers and the Cincinnati Reds. Publisher Gary Slade enjoyed meeting Reds' mascot Rosie Reds (left). Rosie also posed with Karen Cittadino and *AT*'s John W.C. Robinson (above right). The Cincinnati Reds are celebrating the team's 150th anniversary all season long. Slade marked the occasion, posing with *AT* staff member Savannah Breen and her husband Charlie alongside the team's anniversary logo. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON; GARY SLADE

On the midway: Snyder's Amusements

A few of the rides at the five-day Carlisle (Pa.) Fire and Rescue Services' Annual Carnival over the Fourth of July weekend. Snyder's Amusements, Greencastle, Pa., brought in half of its 30-ride inventory. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

Principals of the operation include (from left): Brandi Snyder Brotzman, Adam Brotzman, Donnie Snyder and Bubba Brotzman. Adam was only able to hire three H2B visa workers this season, all from Mexico. This is the first time he has worked with the program. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

ERRATUM

In the Nashville Shores feature from the June 2019 issue of *Amusement Today*, WhiteWater West was not identified as the supplier of the facility's double FlowRider. In addition, WhiteWater West was the supplier of SeaWorld Orlando's Aquatica Ray Rush, which was briefly mentioned in the issue's KareKare Curl feature. *AT* regrets the omission.

BUZZSAW

Continued from page 1

"We had some extra property and we knew we wanted to add some development there," said Turner. "We originally were looking for a different ride, but we saw the additional capacity of the [Vertigo] ride, and we are happy with how accessible it is with the 48-inch height requirement. It has such good throughput numbers."

Mike Gill, president of ARM, says the Buzzsaw project solidified shortly after the IAAPA Attractions Expo last November. "We put this discussion together in late 2018," he said. "I originally started talks with **Mark Larkey**, president of FACE. That quickly grew into a meeting and park visit that included **Bucky and Rusty Mabe**, owners of FACE. We got to work through some added features to the ride with the customer."

"[Our ride] is the first ARM Vertigo ride to have an entertainment package," said Turner. "There is a separate speaker system that plays independent music for the ride when it is running."

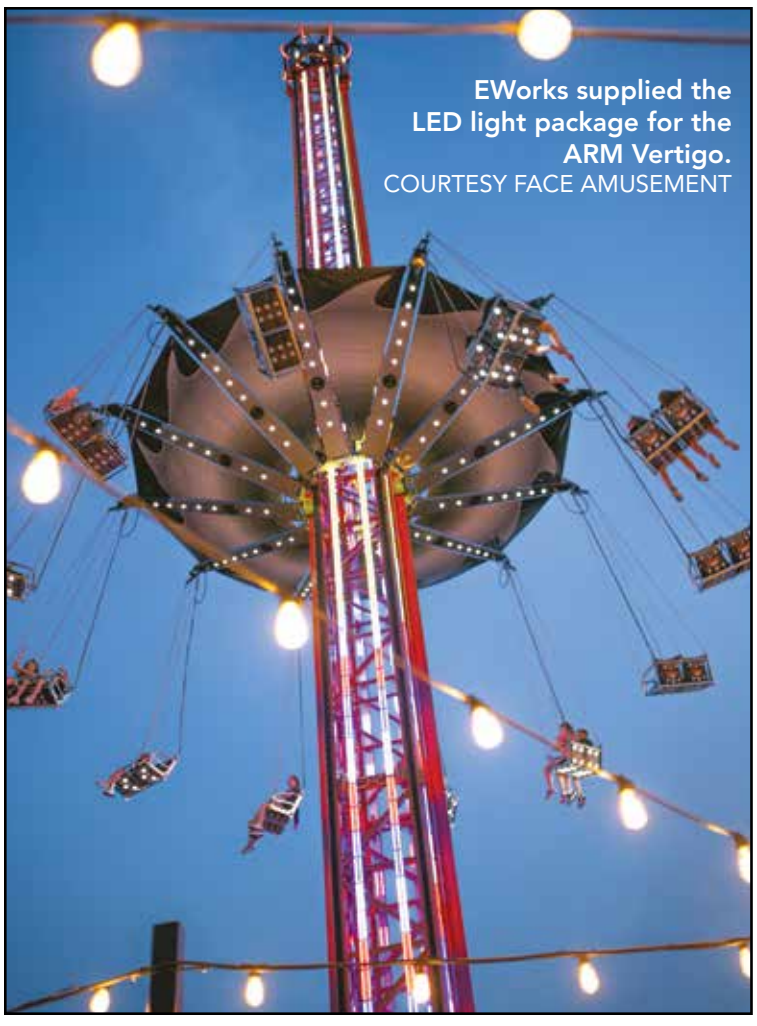
"There are some additional graphics and lighting on each passenger seat," added Gill. "There is a JBL audio system that is battery operated, along with the lighting system that is battery operated."

Gill noted that the batteries used were lithium batteries, which offers the advantage over other battery systems by outputting a steady voltage for a specific time and then shutting off when not in use. Traditional battery systems are continuously running and voltage can drop as the battery is depleted. The diagnostics, built-in fire protection and LED screens that come with lithium add to the productivity of their use.

"We also used a special paint at their request," said Gill. "It's a metallic paint system that was unique to any other ride we had ever done. There are just a lot of added features with the help of the FACE organization. They are really deep in talented people. I worked closely with Rusty though all of the added feature details. They have a graphics department that was able to put together the look and feel that they were trying to achieve on the theming of this ride. Along with their help and direction with what graphics they were looking for, it led to some really cool features that will be options for other customers in the future."

The LED lighting comes courtesy of **EWorks**. "We are the main supplier to ARM and build packages for them," said **Lars Koch**, vice president. "We always have lights shining on the outside of the tower, but this was an experiment because we also added lights inside the tower illuminating the actual structure of the tower — this was a first. It looks fantastic; it came out better than expected. This is proof that it can make a difference by changing the lighting on the inside as well."

Above, Face Amusement, Branson Sawmill and city officials cut the grand opening ribbon on the new ride and reimagined entertainment complex. Below, Sawmill Sally and Sam, along with lumberjack Bucksaw Bob, show off expanded merchandise. COURTESY ARM.; FACE AMUSEMENT



EWorks supplied the LED light package for the ARM Vertigo. COURTESY FACE AMUSEMENT

EWorks has been in business since 1994. All LED lighting products from the company are manufactured within the United States and never outsourced, ensuring highest quality standards.

One ride on each of the two rides is $23.99, but the facility has responded to requests and made an all-day package of just $29.99 to ride both rides as much as the customer wants during the day. For the first time, season passes are also offered at $99.99.

Below the loading area is "grass" carpeting rather than typical asphalt or concrete, which helps unify the new direction the complex has taken. Music is also played throughout.

"Guests love the ride and comment on how smooth it is," said Turner. "It is a beautiful view of the Ozark Mountains in the area. We sit on top of a valley, so when you are 123 feet in the air, it feels much higher than that with the sightlines during the day. At night you have a wonderful view of the Branson skyline, which has a lot of great attractions that are lit up. We've had guests from ages seven to 84 ride, and they've all had a great time."

Also new is HeartWood, a new restaurant eatery. The menu, developed by Michael Thompson, executive chef at FACE Amusement, includes Ozark-inspired flatbreads and pizzas.

Merchandise and retail have also been expanded within the center's gift shop.

At the opening of the swing ride, Mayor **Edd Akers** stated, "We've got exciting things in the show area and we have things going on that will shore up year-round employment in Branson."

•thebransoncoaster.com

HeartWood features an Ozark-inspired take on comfort food. COURTESY FACE AMUSEMENT

THE BRANSON BUZZSAW

Thank you to FACE for welcoming the Branson Buzzsaw!

ARM

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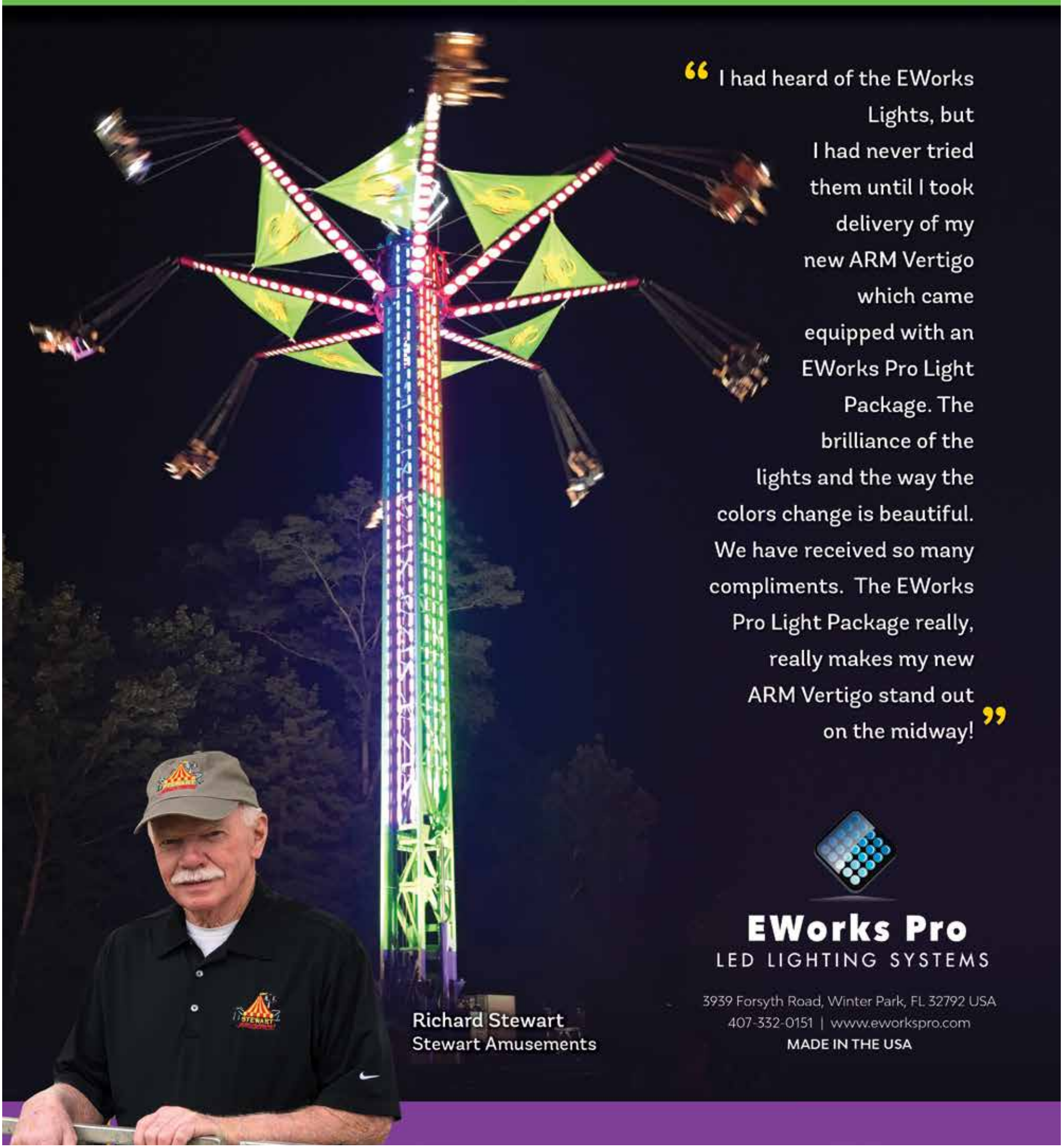

“I had heard of the EWorks Lights, but I had never tried them until I took delivery of my new ARM Vertigo which came equipped with an EWorks Pro Light Package. The brilliance of the lights and the way the colors change is beautiful. We have received so many compliments. The EWorks Pro Light Package really, really makes my new ARM Vertigo stand out on the midway!”

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Stewart Amusements

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MOREY'S
Continued from page 1

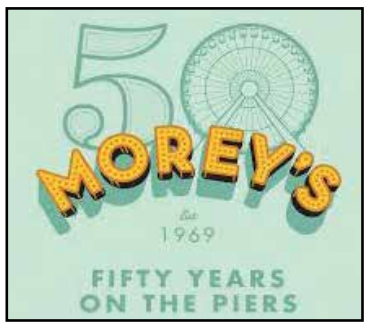
a mix of rides to keep visitors close for longer periods of time. To do that, they appealed to both families and thrillseekers with offerings for both, but it was their creative flair for the trendy zeitgeist of hot properties — *Jaws*, *King Kong*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Star Wars* — that began a successful journey into kitschy popularity. Name recognition of such attractions soon made the pier, now known as **Morey's Surfside Pier**, the hottest ticket in town. The purchase of Marine Pier late in 1976 fueled the ambitious growth. Renamed to **Mariner's Landing**, the second pier was a statement that the Moreys were a force to be reckoned with. It was the first time summer tourists could buy tickets good on two piers.

In the following decades, the beachfront, as well as the town of Wildwood, underwent some changes. Many of the beachfront amusement piers were closed owing to either misfortune or a decrease in popularity. Wildwood, once synonymous with summer for the middle class, became commonplace and mundane compared to more exotic places and the bigger and highly regarded theme parks.

While portable coasters had always found their place on the piers, larger installations such as those found at theme parks were showcasing seemed out of reach for Wildwood. The Moreys soon took the leap and invested heavily into roller coasters and big European rides. Almost ubiquitous today, the first **Vekoma** boomerang coaster in the United States opened in 1984 on Mariner's Landing. It was a home run. A giant Ferris wheel and more big rides followed. The Zoom Phloom from **O.D. Hopkins** was the highest, fastest flume ride in the United States. Will and Bill Morey kept their properties relevant and remained a big draw.

Other roller coasters

The Wipe Out slide and Kong (left) helped set the stage in the early years training people to expect the weird and trendy. The Ghost Ship (right) employs live scare actors to make the walk-though attraction a thriller each time. COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS; AT/TIM BALDWIN



along the way have included Vekoma's suspended The Great Nor'easter (1995), The Great White woodie from **Custom Coasters Inc.** (1996) and Doo Wopper zigzag coaster from **Zamperla** (2005).

As with any family, things change as generations age. Will, Sr., passed away in 1998, with his wife Jackye joining him shortly thereafter. Their sons, **Will Jr.** and Jack Morey, the current co-owners, spearheaded the business forward and continue to do so today. As the new millennium arrived, the brothers had assumed all interest in the piers from other family members under the entity The Morey Organization.

Jack Morey remarked the passing of his parents as the toughest point in the park's history. "The two founding families separated after four years of wasteful litigation," he said.

Along the way, Wildwood has reinvigorated itself, admittedly with the help of the Moreys. Helping to keep the city vibrant is the refresh of the resort aspect. While Will and Jackye had introduced the Pan American Hotel to Wildwood in 1964, the family entered the hotel business again with the transformation of the Wingate Inn into a retro-themed Starlux Hotel Resort. More accommodations followed with the acquisition of the Port Royal Hotel and the remodel of the Midtown Motel into the Blue Palms.

Today, the piers are thriving. While the emulation of intellectual property isn't possible like it was in the '70s, the management still isn't shy of respecting its history. A throwback to such icons as King Kong came with the reintroduction of Kong, a **Larson International** Flying Scooters on a rooftop, complete with the big ape himself as a central icon. Other signature attractions have arrived such as Ghost Ship, a popular walk-through attraction and artBOX, a trendy locale for area artists to keep things fresh. Three amusement piers, two beachfront water parks and six beach blocks boast 18 acres of more than 100 rides and attractions: Surfside Pier, featuring Ocean Oasis Water Park and Beach Club at 25th Ave.; Mariner's Landing Pier, featuring Raging Waters Water Park at Schellenger Ave.; and **Adventure Pier** at Spencer Ave.

"Who would have thought that a silly little fiberglass slide spotted in a parking lot in Florida would inspire our father and uncle to enter a business about which they knew absolutely zilch," said Jack Morey. "Fifty years later, we've added a few more bells and whistles, but our mission remains the same: to provide a spectacular family recreational experience in an exceptionally safe, clean, friendly and unique environment."

When asked to pinpoint rewarding moments over the years, Morey noted the induction of his and Will's father into the IAAPA Hall of Fame, his brother serving as chair of International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, his service as chair of IAAPA Hall of Fame, and winning *Amusement Today's* Best Seaside Park Golden Ticket in 2015. As always, he is excited about the next attraction.

One of Morey's Piers more one-of-a-kind successes is the Breakfast in the Sky opportunity. On select dates, visitors can enjoy breakfast on the Pier's 156-foot giant wheel. Refined from its paper napkins beginnings, guests now enjoy a full, freshly prepared hot breakfast (including gourmet shrimp, crab and lobster omelets and more) on white tablecloth with spectacular views of the ocean during those mornings. It continues to sell out each summer.

Maggie Warner, spokesperson for Morey's Piers, discussed 50th anniversary plans with *Amusement Today*. "It's always nice when the weather cooperates, and Mother Nature has been on our side so far. As far as how we are celebrating, we didn't really want to throw a party for ourselves, we really wanted to do things for our guests."

Warner spoke of the Funner Summer Challenge, a digital game guests can play through their phones. After completing challenges, visitors win prizes, anything from pier or water park passes to food discounts. The Piers worked with **One Trick Pony**, its ad agency to develop the concept and to execute it for their guests. We did Wildwoodstock in the spring, and that kind of kicked off our 50th celebration with live entertainment and crafts with the kids."

Included in the celebration are new offerings of boardwalk eats. Joe's Fish Co., Stubborn Brother's, Jumbo's Grub & Pub and PigDog Beach Bar + BQ have new specialties including the "Mother of All Bloody Mary's" (a 32 oz. cocktail topped with brisket, shrimp, chicken tenders, fries and more), deep-fried moon pies, Ohio Style nachos, the Mighty Green Burger and the Wild Wooder, a new release from **Cape May Brewing Company**, commemorating 50 years of Morey's Piers. Secret Garden is a new canopy-covered option seating up to 12 guests for an intimate private experience featuring panoramic views of both Surfside Pier and the boardwalk. 50th anniversary Salted Caramel "Piertzel" **Dippin' Dots** are also sold throughout Morey's Piers. Morey's Piers has four restaurants and 16 concession stands.

With the opening of the Runaway Tram Car from **Zierer**, excitement continues through the rest of the summer season.

"A ribbon cutting with Jack and Will at the opening kept things going," said Warner. "It was fun to get people who have been involved with driving the Wildwood tramcar over the years involved with the opening."

"It is vital to mention that we could not have survived the last 50 years without our staff. They have been a significant part of this journey and many of them have worked at Morey's Piers a lot longer than Will and I have," Jack Morey told *AT*. "It is also important to note the symbiotic relationship that we have with our surrounding community in Wildwood, N.J. The public-private nature of the beach and boardwalk environment is what yields the secret sauce that creates the fun, quirky culture of our island and allows our business to survive and thrive."

Founding brothers Bill and Will Morey cut the ribbon with their legs aboard The Great Nor'easter in 1995. The Great White brought a return of the wooden coaster to Wildwood in 1996. COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS; AT/TIM BALDWIN

Zierer provides new Runaway Tram coaster for Morey's Piers

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

The Runaway Tram family coaster reaches a height of 36 feet. COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS

WILDWOOD, N.J. — The Wildwood Sightseer Tramcars have been beloved since their introduction to the boardwalks in 1949. Visitors soon find themselves chanting "Watch the tramcar please" after hearing the announcements echo as the trams pass by throughout the day. The selection of the cherished vehicles to be the theme of the new family coaster for **Morey's Piers** seemed a natural.

Once that was decided, **Jack Rouse Associates** were brought in on the project to develop the look and theme of the coaster and station.

"The Runaway Tram is a great family coaster," said **Maggie Warner**, spokesperson for Morey's Piers. "If people remember the beloved Flitzer that was there, it was a great family attraction that parents could take their kids on it. The Runaway Tram Car is going to be that kind of experience, one that parents can share with their kids."

Standing 36 feet tall, the Runaway Tram is a Force 281 model from Germany-based **Zierer**. Only one other version exists (in Denmark). Co-owner and second-generation partner **Jack Morey**, while on a fall coaster-finding expedition, felt the Zierer coaster was practically custom made for the New Jersey property. The fact that Zierer agreed to squeeze it into their 2019 schedule made it a win-win.

"For a lot of children, it is probably going to be the first roller coaster experience that they have," said Warner. "Sometimes it is difficult to find those rides that are a home run where the whole family enjoys it."

The beginnings of the ride came from the decision to retire a previous **Schwarzkopf** Flitzer that had operated at Morey's Piers for decades. While loved, throughput on the coaster was low, particularly with recent modifications to safety regulations. The ride

▸ **See RUNAWAY, page 9**

Construction of the Runaway Tram coaster led to a refurbishment of the surrounding pier (center). The lead car on the coaster (right) pays homage to the beloved tram operation along the boardwalk. COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS

RUNAWAY

Continued from page 8

had served the park well, but management felt it was time to retire it.

"The Runaway Tram now occupies the same part of the pier where our beloved Flitzer ride once stood," said Warner. "Since the ride takes up a larger area of the pier, we had to move seven rides and completely reconfigure Surfside Pier. Some of those rides included the Doo Wopper family coaster, Dante's Dungeon haunted attraction, Happy Feet, Kiddie Train and Convoy. It was no small feat, but we think our guests have been enjoying the new layout of the pier."

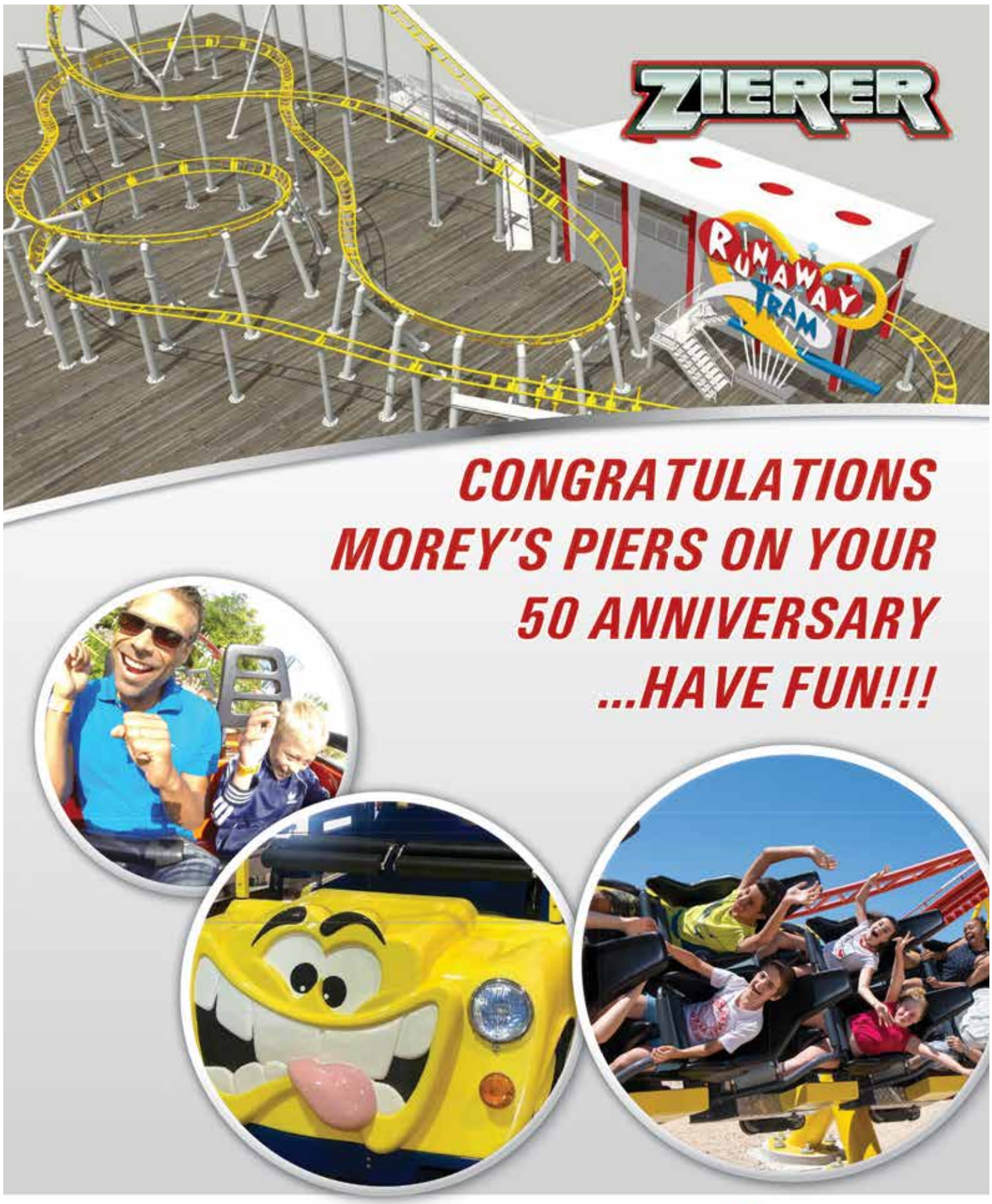
All the new wood surrounding Runaway Tram is testimony to the investment of bringing the coaster to the pier and the significant refurbishment of the pier it entails.

The ride is elevated to allow passengers to walk below. Track length is 922 feet and it reaches a top speed of 28 mph after a tire-driven lift a swooping dive. The train seats 20 passengers, far increasing the ride capacity of the former Flitzer.

"Morey's Piers likes to connect to all things Wildwood," said **Mark Davidson**, a regional representative of **American Coaster Enthusiasts** and a Morey's Pier historian. "It's not like them to just put in something off the shelf; they need to make it their own. And that's why we love them. The sightseer tramcars are really famous, so this resonates with people from the region. It's that extra step to let you know you are at someplace special."

Runaway Tram was scheduled to open just as *Amusement Today* was going to press.

• moreyspiers.com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2019 features fresh take on the Golden Ticket Awards

Registration is open for the 2019 Golden Ticket Awards, presented by ***Amusement Today***, promises to be an outstanding event with a refresh to the categories.

Attendees can look forward to numerous changes. And as always, the Golden Ticket Awards is the Networking Event of the Year.

New this year are some exciting new categories. Industry suppliers and parks have had direct involvement with nominations in Best Innovation of 2019 and Best New Attraction Installation of 2019. As the amusement industry continues to grow in the FEC sector, Breakout Family Entertainment Center of 2019 will recognize parks who have upped their game and improved their offerings.

Other categories have been updated or modified, adding a new layer of perspective. The previous category of Best New Ride has now been reimagined as Best New Family Attraction of 2019 and Best New Roller Coaster of 2019. (Best New Water Park Ride of 2019 remains.) Best Marine Life Park has been expanded to Best New Marine Life/Wildlife Park. Operations, friendliness and cleanliness have combined to become a unified category: Best Park Experience.

Sought-after accolades such as Best Park and Best Water Park, as well as longtime, fan favorites that include roller coasters, water rides, dark rides and more will still be awarded.

Winners are announced live on September 7 at the Golden Ticket Awards ceremony at **Silverwood** in Athol, Idaho. Industry professionals from around the globe are welcome to enjoy all the excitement and benefits of attending this popular networking opportunity. Registration information is found at www.GoldenTicketAwards.com.

Knott's Timber Mountain Log Ride turns 50

The Timber Mountain Log Ride, one of several classic attractions designed by theme park pioneer Bud Hurlbut (top right, with Walter Knott and ride model) for Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, Calif., is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Christened by Cordelia Knott with a bottle of boysenberry juice on July 11, 1969, the standard-setting ride carries guests on a 330-foot-long adventure through an eight-story-high mountain housing a 19th-century lumber camp — concluding with a splashy, 42-foot drop at 30 mph. The first riders were actor John Wayne, a friend of Walter Knott, and Wayne's son, Ethan. In 2013, the attraction underwent an extensive restoration that included new audio-animatronics from Garner Holt Prods.; the company has created two new animatronic characters to honor the ride's latest milestone.
COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM; GARNER HOLT PRODS.

Amusement TODAY — Your Amusement Industry NEWS Leader

2019 Golden Ticket Awards

Presented by ***Amusement Today***, 22nd annual edition
Hosted by **Silverwood Theme Park** and **Rocky Mountain Construction**

Schedule Of Events

Thursday, September 5

Annual Board of Directors Meetings at the CDA Resort for:
8 a.m.-5 p.m.: AIMS International
8 a.m.-5 p.m.: National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives

Friday, September 6

Guests arrive at **The Coeur d'Alene Golf & Spa Resort**
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.: Registration and GTA badge pickup at CDA Resort

Enjoy downtown Coeur d' Alene,
Playland Pier Carousel or CDA Resort Spa and other amenities
or enjoy a round of golf at The Coeur d'Alene Golf Course

•6:30 p.m.: ***Behind-the-scenes exclusive tour of Rocky Mountain Construction***
Evening continues with dinner, drinks and live music

Saturday, September 7

•**8:30 a.m. to 10.00 a.m.:** Late Registration and GTA badge pickup at CDA hotel

•**11 a.m. to 6 p.m.:** Enjoy your day at **Silverwood Theme Park!**
GTA lanyard and GTA rubber wristband are valid for
theme park admission, parking, drink, food and merchandise discounts
and a souvenir photo with Garfield.

•**11:30 a.m. -1 p.m.:** Welcome Reception and Tour of Boulder Beach Water Park
Hosted by Silverwood and WhiteWater West

•**12:00-1 p.m.:** Tour of Boulder Beach Water Park
•**1, 2, or 3 p.m.:** Don't miss these three departure times for the Silverwood Train
in special *reserved* Golden Ticket train cars, a 30-minute ride.
•**2 to 4 p.m. only:** Wristband is also valid for exit line admission to
Timber Terror and Tremors wooden roller coasters.
•**1-2 p.m.:** Choose a park tour: **Scarywood • Silverwood Culinary Tour**
•**2-3 p.m.: Complete Park Integration Software Presentation**

•**4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.: Golden Ticket Awards Dinner**
Hosted by Silverwood

•**7:00 p.m. to 9 p.m.: 2019 Golden Ticket Awards Ceremony**
at Theatre of Illusion Magic Show
Presented by Amusement Today
Hosted by Silverwood

10:00 p.m. to 12 midnight: *Amusement Today* has secured
a post-GTA networking area at the Taphouse Unchained.
GTA attendees will be in the bar area of the restaurant.
Taphouse features 24 microbrews and ciders on tap. Bar is pay as you go.

More details & registation available at
www.GoldenTicketAwards.com

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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

▸ Six Flags, 2019 new attractions — page 22 / Exotics Racing's Vegas Superkarts — page 28

Thrilling Finnegan's Flyer swings into Busch Gardens Williamsburg

Park's Ireland area has a hit, courtesy of S&S Worldwide

AT: *B. Derek Shaw*
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — **Busch Gardens Williamsburg** added a new **S&S Worldwide** Screamin' Swing to the delight of visitors at the Virginia themer. The park strategically located the 32-passenger attraction just over Killarney Bridge after leaving Scotland, on the left, on a high bluff in Ireland. Two pendulum-like arms fly progressively higher with each swing, going beyond 90 degrees, providing incredible aerial views of the park. The dueling arms swing back-and-forth, while the ground plummets into view with each swing.

The bridge offers a great vantage point to watch and listen to comments from first time and seasoned riders of this smooth, yet thrilling, 45 mph, 80-foot-tall attraction.

Amusement Today talked with **Suzy Cheely**, senior leader of design & engineering for the park.

Why was this ride selected over another type? What was the reason for it to be placed in the Ireland section?

Cheely: "We start looking at options for attractions as many as four years ahead of time. For Finnegan's Flyer, we settled on the swing concept late in 2017, contracted with S&S Sansei in early 2018, completed design documents in the spring of 2018, had the general contractor in place by fall of 2018 and started the clearing, grading and install of foundations in October 2018. Ride pieces started arriving in March 2019, and the ride was installed and opened to the public on May 3, 2019.

"There are many considerations that go into ride selection, including location in the park, size of the attraction, budget, and other rides in the area. Having such a visible ride in Ireland encourages guests to experience shows, culinary offerings and shops in this village."

Did construction present any significant challenges?

"The biggest construction challenge is the location. We decided to build it on the side of a hill. The two large ride towers have enormous foundations and the deck is elevated. Finnegan's Flyer required massive foundations that, while not as large as the ride towers, are much larger than what you find under your deck at home." (Note: The size of the ride footprint made it an easier fit.)

How did the name Finnegan's Flyer come about?

"Finnegan is a great Irish name and we felt Finnegan's Flyer would fit our Ireland village perfectly."

Tell us what your experience was like working with S&S.

"S&S is a very collaborative company and has a great group of engineers and project managers that we coordinated with through every stage of the project."

Did any company help with the theming or was it all in-house?

"PGAV was the architect on the project and also provided theming design. Weber Group provided theming and signage elements."

The 80-foot-tall Finnegan's Flyer handles 32 passengers at a time during a 45-mph flight. The grand opening ribbon cutting occurred May 3 (bottom left) and featured area tourism officials, a leprechaun, 12-year-old Vassilios Ringas of Glen Allen, Va. and the mayor of the park's Ireland section.
COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS WILLIAMSBURG; ELIZABETH RINGAS

Tell us about the festivities that occurred when the ride opened to the public.

"Finnegan's Flyer opening day was a great celebration of our newest attraction. Park President Kevin Lembke addressed the crowd from the turret atop Killarney Bridge. Area dignitaries cut the ribbon. We had an Irish band playing in the village. The best part, of course, was when guests got on Finnegan's Flyer for the first time and experienced that great thrill.

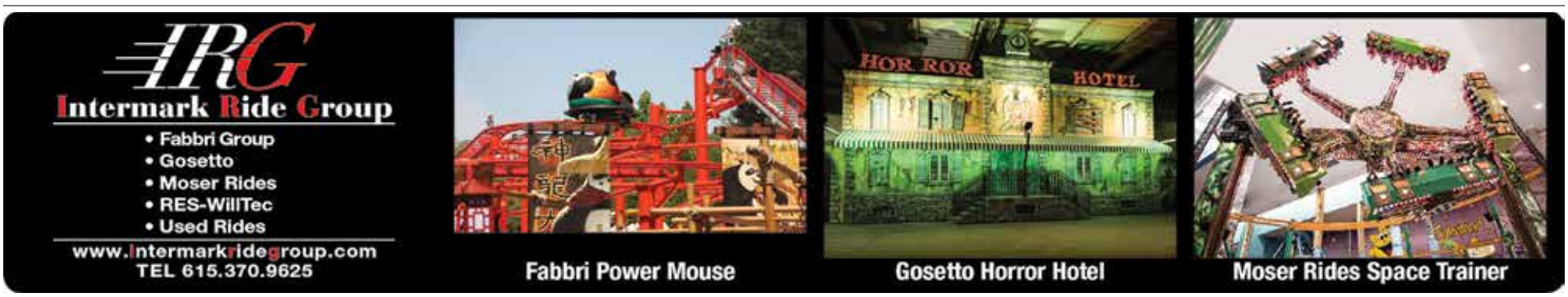
What has been the reaction with Busch Gardens guests?

"Guests love the ride! We try to explain that the ride experience is closer to Apollo's Chariot than Battering Ram. Guests are amazed at the feeling of weightlessness you get with every cycle of the swing!"

One of the invited dignitaries to opening day festivities was **Elizabeth Ringas**, communications director for **American Coaster Enthusiasts**. She shared her thoughts on the new ride:

"The views around you are exceptional and the intricate detail work on the ride makes it part of the natural landscape. My favorite part of the day was standing on the bridge watching everyone ride and listening to the comments of those excited and fearful to ride as they encountered their first ride of the day upon entering the park.

"This ride creates an excitement and stir in Ireland like I have never witnessed. Each side offers a very different ride and those seeking more thrills should face the queue. That first look into the ravine is breathtaking as you reach higher and higher into the sky. The best ride is the one after dark as you stare into the dark abyss of the river!"



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Two new additions fit in at Knoebels Amusement Resort in 2019

AT: *B. Derek Shaw*
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

ELYSBURG, Pa. — Just in time for the 2019 season the 45-acre **Knoebels Amusement Resort** added two new rides — sort of. One is a replacement of the 2001 **Dartron** Downdraft with a new version by **Battech Enterprises**.

"A Facebook announcement of Downdraft's departure made it evident many guests just weren't ready to say goodbye to the ride," said **Stacy Ososkie**, public relations director. "It's safe to say we weren't either. Another generation of guests will be able to enjoy the thrill of swooping 40 feet in the air on a shiny, new Downdraft." The new version is nearly identical to the original one that was installed 19 years ago. The only changes included updated graphics and presentation, including adding an LED light package.

"It has a proven mechanical system. We haven't seen any problems with that," said **Albert Frieden**, managing member of Battech. The 15-rpm thrill ride has a two-minute ride cycle.

Frieden was asked about his relationship with the park. "I have known them for several years. It [the ride switch out] went very well for both of us – a happy transaction."

A 16-passenger Mini Breakdance (Crazy Cabs) from **SBF/Visa Group** (represented by **Rides 4 U, Inc.**), rethemed with logs instead of taxis and named Tumbling Timbers, was added near Fandango and Cub Cars rides, and the Monkey Madness game. It occupies the exact same space as the former ride that was there.

"Both the ride platform and cars spin, creating a surprisingly thrilling family ride experience," said Ososkie. "Visitors need to be at least 36 inches tall to ride Tumbling Timbers with an adult, and 47 inches to ride alone."

"Everything about Tumbling Timbers 'just fits,'" said **Brian Knoebel**, fourth generation co-owner of Knoebels. "Yes, it perfectly fits in the available space, but it's also a great addition to the ride lineup in that area. The woodland theming ties in with the groves found throughout the park, and the history of the property as a sawmill."

The new Downdraft, sporting a new paint job, began operating April 27, opening day. Knoebels is America's largest free-admission amusement park.

•knoebels.com

A 16-passenger SBF/Visa Group Mini Break Dance (above) has been themed as Tumbling Timbers. A new version of an old favorite, Downdraft was originally installed in 2001 and switched out for a new 2019 model (right). COURTESY KNOEBELS AMUSEMENT RESORT; AT/B. DEREK SHAW

Tennessee Flying Theater, a Dynamic Attractions co-venture

2021 will see a flying theater from Dynamic Attractions debut at The Island in Pigeon Forge (inset). COURTESY DYNAMIC ATTRACTIONS

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — **Island Flyers LLC** and **High Express Holdings Inc.** have announced a co-venture for a **Dynamic Attractions** flying theater attraction at **The Island at Pigeon Forge**. The operating agreement requires an equal investment from each of the partners totaling $4 million into the single purpose entity known as **Smoky Mountain Flyers, LLC**.

"Our first co-venture has all the ingredients for a successful attraction: an extremely popular location, an experienced attraction operations partner and a world-class attraction to captivate the visitors," stated Guy Nelson, CEO of Dynamic Attractions.

•dynamicattractions.com

Six Flags Discovery Kingdom earns American Humane Certification

WASHINGTON D.C. — **American Humane**, the country's first national humane organization and the world's largest certifier of animal welfare and well-being, announced that **Six Flags Discovery Kingdom** of Vallejo, Calif., has earned the Humane Certified seal of approval for its animal encounters and attractions, demonstrating the good welfare and treatment given to the animals in its care. This includes dolphins, sea lions, alligators, sharks, tigers and many other incredible species.

"Congratulations to Six Flags Discovery Kingdom for their certification achievement," said **Robin Ganzert, Ph.D.**, American Humane president and CEO. "With Americans increasingly concerned about the treatment of animals, it's vital to bring all zoos, aquariums and parks to higher levels of animal welfare and to recognize those who are upholding these standards."

"As a unique combination animal and thrill park, it is incredibly special and important to receive this designation from American Humane," said **Dianne Cameron**, animal care director, at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom. "This certification further establishes our commitment to providing the highest standards of care for the animals at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom."

Humane Certified is the first program solely devoted to helping verify the welfare, well-being and demonstrably humane treatment of animals living in zoos, aquariums, and conservation centers across the globe. The program enforces rigorous, science-based and comprehensive criteria for animal welfare, developed by an independent scientific advisory committee comprised of world-renowned leaders in the fields of animal science, animal behavior, and animal ethics.

As a result of meeting the many outcomes-based welfare requirements involved by the program, Discovery Kingdom is joining a select group of 28 leading U.S. institutions to qualify for this certification.

The Humane Certified program's extensive criteria exhaustively review the many dimensions of animal welfare and well-being, with areas of evaluation including: excellent health and housing; positive social interactions within groups of animals, as well as between animals and handlers; safe and stimulating environments, with concern for factors such as appropriate lighting, sound levels, air quality, and thermoregulation; and evidence of thorough preparation and protocols established to prevent and manage medical or operational emergencies.

For added rigor, Six Flags Discovery Kingdom's compliance with the Humane Certified standards was verified through an independent audit.

New at Knoebels in 2019!
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Investments in rides, attractions serve U.S. amusement parks well

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Park officials who made ride or attraction purchases for 2019 are happy they did, and, so far, their guests are equally as pleased.

Following is just a sampling of those new attractions at U.S. parks.

Bay Beach Amusement Park

Jason Arnoldi, manager, of this Green Bay, Wis., facility has had nothing but good feedback about the new **Chance Rides** wheel that opened at his lake side park July 4. It was certainly, a celebration, even though the rough winter caused some construction delays. Officials there had tried to get the wheel going during Memorial Day weekend.

"Opening over Memorial Day was an aggressive goal anyway," Arnoldi said. "But everything went really well. Chance Rides is a first-class company and amazing to work with. I have no complaints."

And neither do guests who are riding the wheel, which is 100 feet above ground. There are 20 gondolas that can seat six passengers each. There is even a gondola that meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, the first Chance has ever made on a wheel that size.

"There are jump seats inside, which are spring-loaded and can just be strapped up or let down depending on who is riding," Arnoldi said. "We had a gentleman in a wheel chair here who had sent his daughter to ride the wheel first to see if he could do it. He came over and he was able to ride. He was so happy. It almost makes you cry."

The ADA gondola is the same size as the other gondolas, but has a slightly flatter bottom to allow for the chair as well as the ramp that is used to board the chair. In addition, the door is slightly larger than the others to allow for the size of the chair. One or two others may ride with the chair depending on the size of the chair. If the gondola is not needed for a wheel chair, all passengers are lowered.

Arnoldi said the location of the wheel on the property also is working perfectly.

"It goes up and over the water," Arnoldi said. "I am nothing but happy."

In addition to the new wheel, Bay Beach Amusement Park has several other projects close to construction. For one thing, park officials are bringing back the beach with sand set to be poured at some point in the near future. A boardwalk will be built along the park's property and the beach. In addition, a 400-foot pier will be built.

"We have the financing now for these projects but with the winter we had and the rain, the water is at an all-time high," Arnoldi said. "We want to see if it goes higher. We don't want to fill the beach with sand just to have it wash away."

Arnoldi said the projects are expected to cost $7 million.

Bay Beach is a municipal amusement park, situated near the mouth of the Fox River on the east bank as it flows into Green Bay, a sub-basin for Lake Michigan. It is entirely self-funded. There is a non-profit organization, Friends of Bay Beach, that raises funds for the park.

It features more than 20 rides and attractions including the Zippin' Pippin' roller coaster. Admission to the park is free with ride tickets costing 25 cents. Most rides take one or two tickets. The new wheel takes three.

The Bay Beach staff poses in front of park's new Chance Rides wheel which debuted on July 4, 2019. The wheel features 20 gondolas, one of which meets ADA standards (right). The ADA gondola is a first for Chance Rides on a 100-foot-tall wheel.
COURTESY BAY BEACH AMUSEMENT PARK

Arnolds Amusement Park

The Wild Mouse is back at Arnolds this year, and, according to **Paul Plum,** Arnolds marketing director, everything is running smoothly.

The park, located in Arnolds Park, Iowa, on the Okoboji River, purchased the **Allan Hershell** coaster from **Joyland Amusement Park** in Lubbock, Texas.

"We had the same type of ride in the late 1950s to 1970s," Plum said. "We now have brought the ride back to the park."

Arnolds Amusement Park is operated by a non-profit organization. It features rides, attractions, concessions, musical entertainment and the Maritime Museum and the Amusement Park Museum.

Arnolds Park opened the Allan Hershell mouse coaster (above), it was relocated from Joyland Amusement Park of Lubbock, Texas. An SBF/ Visa Group Dance Party 360 (right) has guests soarding at Western Playland.
COURTESY ARNOLDS PARK; WESTERN PLAYLAND

"We have a fundraising group called Imagine Great Lakes," Plum said. "The Maritime Museum is the umbrella of that group. We are governed by a board of directors."

The current renovations are the third phase of a three-phase project with a total price tag of $15 million.

The first phase included a new parking lot and the infrastructure for the next two phases. Phase two included the restoration of the majestic pavilion and an addition to the Maritime and Amusement Park museums.

Phase two projects were completed and opened a year ago.

The third phase seems right on schedule with the opening of the coaster this season and the opening of a new music venue called the Roof Garden set for the first of this month. The new venue has been constructed to mimic the original Roof Garden that once stood on the grounds.

Entertainment inside Roof Garden begins on August 2 and will run on select days for the remainder of the month.

Western Playland

This park, located in Sunland Park, N.M., opened the 2019 season the last weekend in February. Along with the park opening came the opening of a brand new ride there, an **SBF/ Visa Group** Dance Party 360 that the park named Loco 360.

"The response has been really great," said **Pat Thomson**, park owner. "We took out an old Round-up and retired it to make space for the new ride."

Thomson said so far the year has been going well with great weather and lots of crowds.

"We did a lot of extra landscaping in the park this year," he said. "Our biggest problem this year has been in hiring. It has been tough in that regards."

Thomson is looking to make a purchase on another new ride for the 2020 season, but hasn't decided on what that will be.

"I like to wait closer to the end of the season before I make a decision," he said.

Thomson said he likes to buy new, but he likes to see, first, how his season goes, and, secondly, see what else is out there that is performing well.

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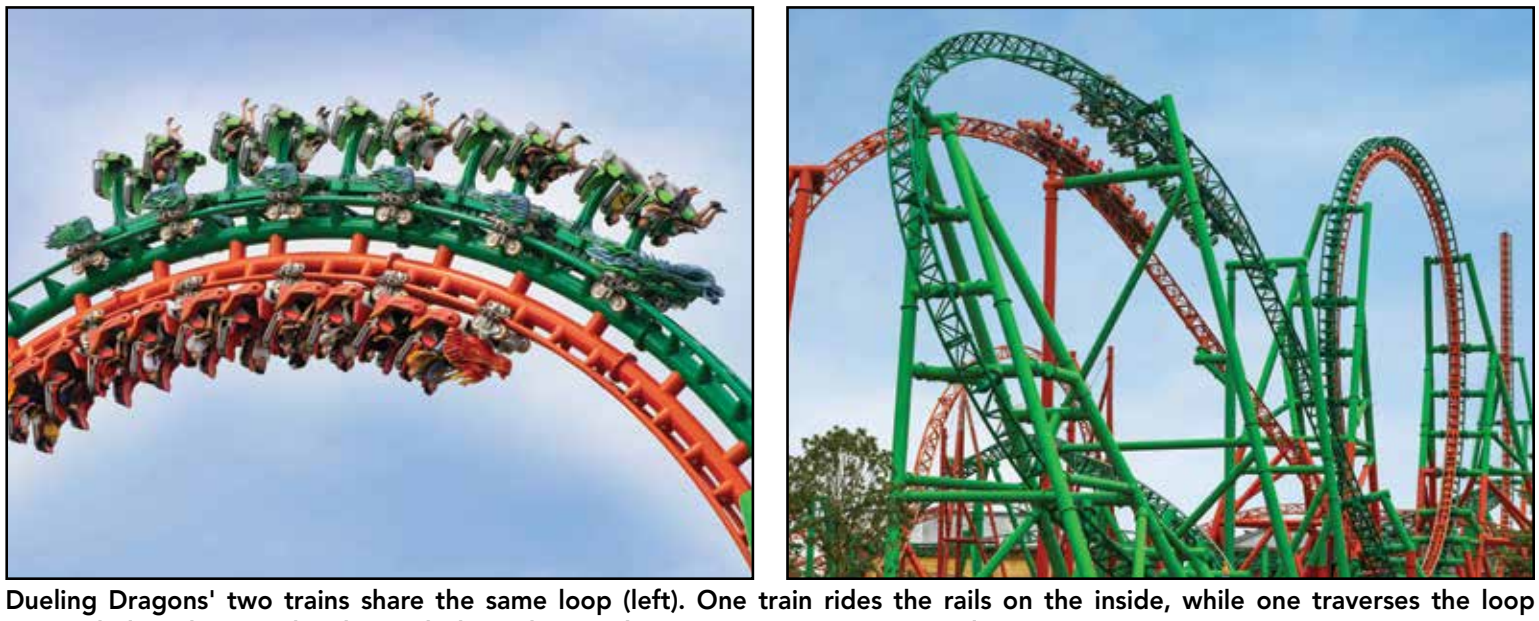
China's Dueling Dragons brings beloved coaster concept back into existence

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com



Dueling Dragons' two trains share the same loop (left). One train rides the rails on the inside, while one traverses the loop suspended on the outside. The tracks later diverge, but continue to interwine and interact. COURTESY INTAMIN

HUADU, Guangzhou, China — Park goers at **Guangzhou Sunac Land** in China may be delighted with an ingenious new roller coaster, but it would not be surprising for countless Americans to find a soft spot for it, even from a distance.

Capturing the essence of a retired dueling roller coaster of the same name from Universal's Islands of Adventure (Orlando, Fla.), this new creation was supplied by **Intamin**. The interactive nature between the two trains, as well as the dragon motif styling bring back to life many of the aspects of the lost Florida attraction. But this new incarnation offers even more.

The new dueling coaster features two tracks. The red track sports a traditional sit-down train. The green track offers an inverted coaster with passengers positioned below the rails with feet dangling freely.

In a never-before-seen maneuver, the two trains share the same loop. One train rides the rails on the inside, while one traverses the loop suspended on the outside. It's an iconic moment that most roller coasters can only aspire to achieve, certainly one that makes an iconic statement.

As the ride experience unfolds, both trains, one on top of the other, leave the station and curve onto a launch track. Once a section of switch track behind them moves positions, a mild LSM launch moves both trains partially through the loop. Rolling backward, a second launch pushes each train up a 183-foot vertical reverse spike creating a moment of zero gravity. Plummeting toward the ground once again, the third launch creates top speed: 62 mph for the sit-down train, 68 mph for the suspended train. Both trains navigate the same loop at the same time, delivering a spectacular "wow" for onlookers.

The tracks diverge at that point but continue to intertwine, interact and both courses feature an underground tunnel. During the flight, each track boasts four inversions and the layout design creates five "near miss" encounters. The breathless journey culminates with the trains stacking once again on the brake run. Track length for the green track is 2,592 feet; the red track is slightly longer at 2,723 feet.

Intamin has taken great pride in the innovation of the ergonomic seat design, as well as the water-cooling system integrated in to the LSM drives.

With each train offering a different experience, guests will be eager to try both tracks for the full impact of what the innovative and creative concept can offer.

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Rocky Mountain Construction's first transformation in Europe

Untamed hybrid opens at Walibi Holland, lives up to the name

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Rocky Mountain Construction transformed Robin Hood into Untamed.
COURTESY
WALIBI HOLLAND

Untamed features an 80-degree first drop.
COURTESY
WALIBI
HOLLAND

FLEVOLAND, The Netherlands — **Rocky Mountain Construction** has captivated the amusement industry in less than a decade with its smooth — but wild — roller coaster layouts, picking up four Golden Ticket Awards for Best New Ride in recent years. Beginning with New Texas Giant at Six Flags Over Texas, the term hybrid was born: steel track on wooden structure. Since then, RMC has opened a dozen such transformations. The first such makeover in Europe has now debuted at **Walibi Holland**.

Not every project from RMC begins with a previously standing structure. The company's first venture in Europe came was a from-the-ground-up wooden coaster at **Kolmården** in Sweden.

Walibi Holland's transformation took over a former wooden coaster named Robin Hood. At a reported investment of 12.5 million euros, the new project — now thrilling riders under the name Untamed — has burst onto the scene with acclaim. Avid coaster fans are showering the outrageous ride with loving accolades.

Rocky Mountain Construction President **Fred Grubb** was on hand at the ride's opening on July 1. "This is at the top of the list. It's incredible," Grubb pleasingly said.

It's no surprise the Dutch audience is finding Untamed a crowd pleaser. Not only is it nothing like anything else in the region, but the coaster boasts some dramatic elements. An uphill barrel roll and 80-degree first drop are easy to comprehend. Throw in maneuvers named "step-up under flip" and "270-degree inverting stall" and it's all new territory. In all, there are five inversions, but outwardly banked moments (including leaving the station) and multiple points of negative Gs (14 to be exact) keep the action continuous to the final brake run.

"I think people are going to really enjoy the last roll before the brakes," said RMC COO Jake **Kilcup**. "It isn't particularly new, but its so close to the ground it surprises you."

Designed by **Alan Schilke** of **Ride Centerline**, Untamed stands up against his other creations well known for being outrageous, scream-producing thrillers.

Two trains supplied by Rocky Mountain Construction can deliver a theoretical capacity of 900 riders per hour. Top speed is 57mph and track length is just over 3,559 feet. The ride stands at 119 feet tall and the first drop plunges 116 feet on caramel-colored I-Box track.

The wooden structure was originally built in 2000 and operated as a wooden coaster through October 2018.

"It was important to the customer that they didn't lose their wooden coaster for the Halloween event," said Kilcup. "We like to keep our customers happy, so it took quite a bit of preplanning and staging for the installation. We were able to manufacture most of the components early in this case."

Theming to the ride was reported to be influenced by The Burning Man festival. Placed in the Wilderness area of the park, structures are seen being reclaimed by nature. On the side of the lift, the word LOVE is positioned in lights. Elsewhere, the words BE BRAVE are seen. Those brave souls are enjoying the ride of their lives.

• **www.walibi.nl**

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Bobbejaanland opens the Land of Legends

LICHTAART, Belgium — Bobbejaanland opened its new Land of Legends themed area in late June. The five-acre area features the 131-foot-tall triple launch Fury coaster from Gerstlauer and a general concept and story line by Leisure Expert Group.
COURTESY THE
LEISURE EXPERT GROUP

Park Post-its

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The restoration of **NASA's Apollo Mission Control Center** at the **Space Center Houston** is complete and was opened to guests July 1, just in time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 lunar mission. The tour of the newly restored room is part of the center's NASA Tram Tours and Level 9 VIP Tours.

Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1985, Space Center Houston, the city of Webster and **NASA Johnson Space Center** worked together over two years to restore the room that fueled the space race and innovation that changed the course of history.

The room was used during the Gemini, Apollo and Shuttle eras. The scope of the restoration project included the Mission Operations Control Room (MOCR), the Visitor Viewing Room, Simulation Control Room and the Summary Display Projection Room (also called the "bat cave").

Guests may now see the restored flight control consoles with buttons illuminated. There of five large screens across the front of the room reactivated with projections to recreate the exact images seen during the Apollo 11 mission. Other details include period-authentic coat racks, chairs and a coffee station. Furnishings on the consoles include flight control manuals, ashtrays, pens, maps, coffee cups and headsets.

To support the restoration, the city of Webster gave the lead gift of $3.5 million toward the $5 million fundraising campaign.

•

This season there is a brand-new area to chill out and enjoy a drink with a view at **SeaWorld San Diego**, Calif. Called the Waterfront, the new area features a bayside beer garden, complete with a stunning view of San Diego's iconic Mission Bay. It also features family-friendly games, craft beer, wine, frozen drinks, a special menu of light bites and the sounds of mellow Southern California vibes on the Waterfront Stage. It is open every Saturday and Sunday throughout the summer.

In other SeaWorld of San Diego news, the park began its Saturday night fireworks show on July 6. The shows will be presented through the remainder of August.

SeaWorld's festive summer nighttime celebration, Electric Ocean, has been in full swing with special shows, lighting installations and dance parties. It runs through September 2.

•

Pacific Park at Santa Monica (Calif.) Pier has a lot going on this summer. Among the varity of activities was the presentation of a new game at the beginning of the summer. Called Pier Planko, the game is unique to Pacific Park because it was designed and constructed by the park team.

It was inspired by the surfers and wave riders who cruise just south of the pier every morning. While there are other drop puck style games available, none reflect the heritage of Southern California beach culture like Pier Planko.

Another Pacific Park original is in the form of a new children's book inspired by the park's Sea Dragon ride. Written by Santa Monica Pier Historian **James Harris** and his 10-year-old daughter, **Stella Harris,** the book is entitled *Stella Rose and the Sea Dragon*. It is on sale at local bookstores and online retailers.

The children's book tells a story about a young girl named Stella Rose and how she gathered the courage to finally ride a "big kid" ride at the Santa Monica Pier. She does this while befriending a green Sea Dragon, inspired by Pacific Park's Sea Dragon ride.

The book was illustrated by **Michael Bailey.**

Pacific Park is a free-admission park offering 12 rides, 14 midway games, an oceanfront food plaza and beachside shopping.

•

Adventure Science Museum, Nashville, Tenn., opened a new exhibit and a major expansion of its Innovation Incubator last month. Both projects, which together cost $1.8 million, are part of a complete overhaul of the nonprofit museum.

The new exhibit is a music-themed exhibit called the soundBox and was underwritten by **The Frist Foundation**. It allows guests to explore the science of music and sound through 14 hands-on social experiences, all while celebrating Nashville's music community.

Profiles of Nashville music industry professionals are showcased throughout the space. Visitors can create their own music tracks and visualize beats on glowing walls, play in a virtual band, scan their fingerprints to convert the ridges into songs and animations and more.

At the newly designed Innovation Incubator, which nearly tripled in size, guests can learn cutting-edge technologies, maker processes and creative innovations through access to 3D printers, vinyl and laser cutters, coding stations and robotics. The space has new equipment, more programming and can now accommodate up to 30 people in certain classes, as opposed to a six person cap in the old space.

Nashville's science museum originally opened in 1945 at a downtown location. It moved to its current location in 1974 and has undergone several periods of expansions since.

•

Construction of **Zombie Apocalypse Park,** the first of its kind in the UAE, is underway and is expected to open sometime mid-2020. **Nakheel Malls**, the retail arm of master developer Nakheel, has teamed up with **Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club** to create the 65,000-square-foot attraction.

Planned activities include live acts, games, battles and events, all powered by glow-in-the-dark technology. There will be paintball games, escape games, VR 9D cinema, haunted house, axe throw, archery, haunted corn maze, air soft battle games, laser tag, trampolines, target shooting, zombie apocalypse attack and zombie runs.

Zombie Apocalypse Park also will feature a zombie-themed cafe, party room and its own parking lot.

In making the announcement, **Omar Khoory,** managing director of Nakheel Malls, said: "We are committed to creating unique, unforgettable experiences, attractions and facilities at our existing and upcoming retail developments. The Zombie Apocalypse Park will be a huge draw at The Night Market, attracting tourists, businesses and schools for team-building events and families and individuals for a new kind of entertainment."

'Big Bang Theory' sets join Warner Bros. Studio Tour

AT: *Dean Lamanna*
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BURBANK, Calif. — Fans of the hit **CBS** television situation comedy *The Big Bang Theory* can now step into the show's Apt. 4A, see its infamous elevator and visit the story's **CalTech** Physics Lab Cafeteria setting, thanks to **Warner Bros. Studio Tour Hollywood**.

The longest-running multi-camera series in TV history, with 279 episodes broadcast over 12 years, *The Big Bang Theory* is the newest addition to Stage 48: Script to Screen — the studio tour's interactive soundstage. The display officially debuted June 28, about six weeks after the last original episode aired in mid-May.

The sets, along with select props, transport visitors to Pasadena, Calif., where the series' characters focused on scientific discoveries, science fiction and savory take-out Chinese food in Apt. 4A. Photo opportunities abound in the exhibit, which presents the authentic spaces inhabited by characters Leonard (**Johnny Galecki**), Sheldon (**Jim Parsons**), Penny (**Kaley Cuoco**) and Amy (**Mayim Bialik**).

Additionally, visitors can peer into the CalTech Physics Lab Cafeteria, where Leonard, Sheldon, Howard (**Simon Helberg**) and Raj (**Kunal Nayyar**) often discussed the complexities of life and their relationships, as well as comic book superpowers. The sets also feature original costumes worn by the cast.

"We are thrilled to invite fans of *The Big Bang Theory* to step into these iconic sets from such a beloved show," said **Gary Soloff**, the tour's director of marketing. "There is nothing like being in the very spot that legendary film and TV shows were created and seeing authentic sets up close and personal. It's a truly emotional experience, especially with a memorable show that has such a broad global following."

Added **Chuck Lorre**, series co-creator and executive producer: "For 12 seasons, the cast and crew of *The Big Bang Theory* found their home away from home on these sets on Stage 25 [at Warner Bros.]. Apt. 4A and other locales will remind visitors of all the laughter that took place on our show."

Through evolving exhibits and experiences, Warner Bros. Studio Hollywood celebrates the sets and production details that have helped the 95-year-old, 110-acre studio make its moving-image magic. It offers visitors the opportunity to get closer to popular films and TV shows such as *Batman, Friends, Casablanca, Aquaman, Wonder Woman* and more.

• wbstudiotour.com

Sets, props and costumes from *The Big Bang Theory* at Warner Bros. Studio Tour Hollywood include Apt. 4A (above) and the getup worn by actor Jim Parsons, who played Sheldon (left). COURTESY WARNER BROS. STUDIO TOUR HOLLYWOOD

Multiple suppliers deliver wet and dry attractions

Six Flags parks offer a wide range of new, chain-wide thrills in 2019

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
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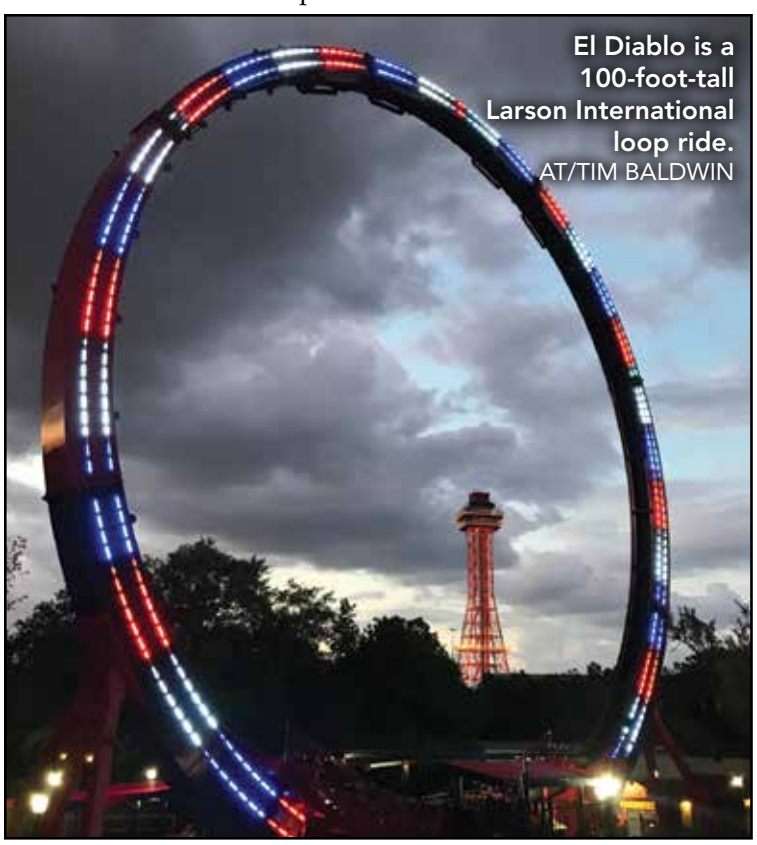
Six Flags Theme Parks prides itself on adding thrills and excitement to each of its parks. Using various ride manufacturers and suppliers, the 2019 season has seen additions geared toward guests across the boards — from family entertainment to daredevil thrill seekers.

Zamperla remains a significant supplier for the chain. On the high-thrill end, three Giant or Giga Discovery pendulum rides were delivered to parks. Pandemonium is the name of the attraction at **Six Flags Over Georgia**. The ride swings riders up to 15 stories and anchors a new steam punk-themed land. Park President **Dale Kaetzel** remarked, "Our goal at Six Flags is to reach new heights every year. Pandemonium is the prefect mix of mayhem and adrenaline in one action-packed ride."

Six Flags Great Adventure and **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** installed the Giga versions swinging riders up to 17 stories. The New Jersey park has named the ride Wonder Woman Lasso of Truth, while the San Antonio park has named it Joker Carnival of Chaos. The latter took a creative leap further and constructed a zany funhouse through which riders navigate in small groups where Mr. Freeze and other villainous encounters take place before emerging into the main queue. Of note, Fiesta Texas also debuted a re-themed dark ride, Pirates of the Deep Sea, on January 1.

A Zamperla Endeavor (above) flies in St. Louis with a Supergirl theme. Six Flags Darien Lake has decked out the new SkyScreamer (top right) with a dazzling LED light package. An indoor Chance Freestyle (right) is themed to Cyborg at Six Flags New England.
COURTESY TERRY KITE; RIDE ENTERTAINMENT; SIX FLAGS

Bucket Blasters is a Zamperla Watermania added to the **Hurricane Harbor** water park at **The Great Escape**, along with Shipwreck Cove, a children's play area. Also geared toward the family market is a children's ride package, including a roller coaster, at the newly managed park, **Frontier City**. The rethemed children's area is called Timber Town. New family attractions were also added into two newly re-themed areas, Bugs Bunny Boomtown and DC Super Friends, at **Six Flags Mexico**. Within the various ride mix, six are brand new.



El Diablo is a 100-foot-tall Larson International loop ride.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

Going for the teens, Supergirl Skyflyer is a Zamperla Endeavor introduced to **Six Flags St. Louis**.

Larson International cranked up the heat with El Diablo at **Six Flags Over Texas**, the ride supplier's second 100-foot looping thriller. It is the tallest version of that style of ride manufactured.

"It has brought new life to this corner of the park. That area hasn't received attention in some time," said **Chris Baker**, director of operations, Six Flags Over Texas. "The lights at night look really sensational."

In addition to the LED package, the wise move was the ride's placement, as it was nestled into a tight space preserving larger areas of the park for future attraction possibilities.

"The second Giga Loop was much easier to build than the first since we already had welding fixtures built and the material handling aspect figured out," said **Hunter Novotny**, engineer and manager, Larson International. "The ride has so much mass to it — around 250,000 pounds assembled!"

Also addressing a major issue in Texas — heat! — Six Flags Over Texas introduced a Splash Parade in July. With just a hint of Mardi Gras with riders aboard throwing beads to onlookers on the midway, the floats and performers are all about spraying guests and getting them wet. Laughter and energy are high along the midway as the innovative parade is a welcome relief in the summer sun.

Another Larson loop has been relocated to **La Ronde** from a sister facility. Dubbed Chaos, the ride stands 70 feet and takes passengers through six inversions in a face-to-face experience.

Chance Rides provided a Freestyle ride, an outward facing WipeOut style attraction, to **Six Flags New England**. Dubbed Cyborg Hyper Drive, the whirling dervish has one more creative edge, it is placed indoors with lighting and theming.

"Our DC-branded attractions are extremely popular with our guests," said Park President **Pete Carmichael**. "We are excited to bring another cutting-edge attraction bearing Cyborg's name."

The first of three major roller coasters to be added to Six Flags parks was **Six Flags Discovery Kingdom**'s Batman The Ride, a 4D Free Spin coaster from **S&S Worldwide**. This particular

▸ **See SIX FLAGS, page 24**

Batman The Ride by S&S Worldwide takes passengers on a courageous journey.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

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Wonder Woman Lasso of Truth is one of three Discovery rides from Zamperla for Six Flags this season. COURTESY SIX FLAGS

SIX FLAGS

Continued from page 22

model has become a Six Flags favorite. The Vallejo, Calif., park's version is the seventh installed from Six Flags. The ride features beyond-vertical drops and magnetically initiated inversions. A fun selling point is that each ride is different as the passengers' weight combined with the seating position dictate the intensity and number of flips.

One of the newly managed Six Flags properties is **Six Flags Darien Lake**. New for this season is Six Flags SkyScreamer, a 32-passenger Star Flyer from **Fun Time**. At a towering height of 242 feet, the attraction is the tallest thrill ride in the state of New York. The tower is decked out with a dramatic LED light package.

"We are thrilled to add this shining beacon and iconic landmark to the Six Flags Darien Lake skyline," said Park President **Chris Thorpe**. "From this impressive tower, guests can take in majestic views of not only the park, but the surrounding countryside below."

Fun Time is represented in the United States by **Ride Entertainment**.

Two big water park attractions have come online for Six Flags. **Hurricane Harbor Oaxtepec**, the closest water park to Mexico City, has introduced King Cobra, a dual slide heavily stylized to the venomous serpent. Supplied by **Polin Waterparks**, the slide culminates with a breathtaking drop into the maw of a King Cobra, with water dripping from its fangs.

Just north of Houston is the newly managed and recently renamed and rethemed **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor Splashtown.**

"That Splashtown tag is very important," said **Chris Thomas**, general manager. "This park has been known by many names, but the one consistent thing is the Splashtown name. No matter what the park is known as, people always know where Splashtown is."

The water park has received numerous upgrades. Painted buildings, themed props and signage and new double-decker treehouse cabanas have brought an enhanced ambience to the water park. Also new is a large, four-passenger slide called Wahoo Wave. Manufactured by **ProSlide Technology**, the six-story slide sends passengers up a wave wall creating a moment of weightlessness before plummeting back down into a splash pool.

Two new major roller coasters at **Six Flags Great America** and **Six Flags Magic Mountain** will be covered in upcoming issues of *Amusement Today*.

•sixflags.com

Refreshed Oil Derrick tower part of Six Flags Over Texas 2019 season

Along with the park's new capital this season, a guest favorite has returned to the **Six Flags Over Texas** lineup. A yearlong painting endeavor last season kept the attraction offline. Now bright and shiny, the tower is bringing guests 300 feet in the air once again.

Celebrating a 50th anniversary this season, the tower opened in 1969 as **Intamin**'s first tower attraction. It was stylized to represent a land-based Oil Derrick. Eagle-eyed visitors can spot restored shipping markers noting Intamin as the builder on pieces of steel on the viewing deck. Intamin went on to build numerous towers, both structural lattice towers, such as the two Eiffel towers at **Kings Island** and **Kings Dominion**, as well as gyro towers, such as the tallest version at the **State Fair of Texas**.

In the early years of operation, a multilane slide was an attraction off the 50-foot level. The slide was retired after the 1975 season.

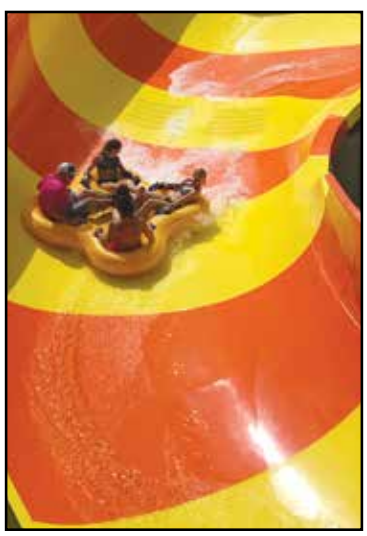
Standing at 300 feet tall, the tower offers views of both Dallas and Ft. Worth on a clear day. During the park's Fourth of July festival, the viewing decks were offered as perks to the Diamond and Diamond Elite levels of park membership during the fireworks displays.

The ride began construction in August 1968 and opened to the public April 1969. The reported cost of the attraction at that time was $750,000. Two high-speed elevators carry passengers up to the two observation decks. The ride has been a park icon since its opening and was the tallest attraction at the park for more than three decades.

—Tim Baldwin

AT/TIM BALDWIN

King Cobra sends riders face to fang (above). Two-story cabanas (below) help bring new ambience to Hurricane Harbor Splashtown. COURTESY POLIN; AT/TIM BALDWIN



The Splash Parade at Six Flags Over Texas (above left) is a huge hit in the summer heat. Wahoo Wave (above right) is a six-story, four-passenger slide from ProSlide. AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY SIX FLAGS

Two towering additions coming to Orlando's Icon Park

ORLANDO — **Icon Park** entertainment complex has announced that two new record-breaking attractions are coming to the Orlando International Drive location.

When it debuts in 2020, the Orlando Slingshot will be the world's tallest slingshot, coming in at more than 300 feet in height and will catapult riders more than 450 feet into the air.

Just across the park, the Orlando Gyro Drop will also open in 2020 and will set a record as the world's tallest free-standing drop tower at 400 feet. After lifting riders into the Florida sky, the Orlando Gyro Drop will plummet back to the ground at speeds nearing 75 mph.

Both attractions will join the popular StarFlyer at Icon Park and bookend the property's original attraction, the 400-foot-tall Wheel at Icon Park.

•iconparkorlando.com

Sawmill Creek Resort acquired by Cedar Fair

SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** announced it has acquired **Sawmill Creek Resort** located in Huron, Ohio. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Commenting on the acquisition, Cedar Fair President and CEO **Richard Zimmermann** said, "We are excited about the opportunity to add Sawmill Creek to our growing portfolio of resort properties serving **Cedar Point**, **Cedar Point Shores Waterpark** and the **Cedar Point Sports Center**, which is currently being expanded to include an indoor sports facility. Sawmill Creek's 236-room resort lodge strengthens both Cedar Point's and the Sandusky area's appeal as a unique and adventurous vacation destination."

Zimmerman added that Cedar Fair plans to make the necessary investment in Sawmill Creek to upgrade and modernize its guest rooms, resort facilities and infrastructure. Improvements are projected to be completed over the next two years.

Sawmill Creek spans a total of 235 acres, including 28 acres of Lake Erie waterfront with a marina, a half-mile beach and 50 acres of undeveloped land. Amenities at the resort include indoor and outdoor swimming pools, three restaurants, a conference center, an 18-hole, **Tom Fazio**-designed golf course and club, and The Shops at Sawmill Creek. In addition, guests can book a sunset cruise on the Sawmill Explorer.

Cedar Fair had previously announced the development of new hotels adjacent to two of its other amusement parks including a SpringHill Suites by Marriott at Carowinds in Charlotte, North Carolina, and a Hyatt-branded hotel on the site of its Canada's Wonderland amusement park near Toronto in Vaughan, Ontario.

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2019 sees Decades Lancaster debut a modern FEC experience

AT: *B. Derek Shaw*
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LANCASTER, Pa. — Three junior high school buddies had a vision that finally came to fruition in the spring of this year. An over-15,000-square-foot family entertainment center with retro arcade games, six lanes of bowling, a 100-seat full service restaurant and 20-seat bar now occupies a 90-year old building that once housed the historic Stahr Armory on North Queen Street, in the heart of downtown Lancaster. Three named partners: **Chris Trendler**, restaurant and bar; **Jonathan Yeager**, graphic artist and marketing; and **Adam Ozimek**, an economist by trade; along with a silent partner are the team heading up this new venture.

Since 2012 the trio has run the highly successful, Lancaster Craft Beer Fest, in the city of Lancaster. At that same time, they had an idea to create bowling lanes in the downtown area, something the city was devoid of for many years. "In 2016, we actually were able to start working on it with a building opportunity in downtown. We were in one building for six months and that fell through. Then we found this building in May of 2017," said Yeager. Construction began in October 2018. March 13 of this year was opening day. "Between the three of our skill sets, a restaurant with entertainment and kind of cool things was always kind of our goal, because it's something we wanted to bring to the town. We're just really happy that we are able to put the whole thing together," said Trendler.

Decades Lancaster offers a six-lane boutique bowling center, nearly 30 digital arcade games, and a full-service restaurant and bar inside the former National Guard Stahr Armory in downtown Lancaster, Pa. COURTESY DECADES LANCASTER

The partners researched various similar venues throughout the country including ones in Cleveland, Ohio, and Philadelphia, Pa. They also learned of an FEC company known as **Punch Bowl Social**, that specializes in "eat-ertainment" — arcade, karaoke, food and drinks. That group started in Denver in 2012 and now has 15 locations nationwide with eight more opening by the end of this year. "All of them had basically everything that we have in here, except the ratios were quite different. We were thinking of elevating [the facility], compared to what we've seen. We know we didn't invent anything, but we did kind of put our own stamp on our version of it. We wanted to take a much higher end, polished approach, especially on the food and beverage," said Trendler.

Situated in the heart of downtown Lancaster, Pa., is the Stahr Armory. Built 90 years ago, it became home to Decades Lancaster in mid-March. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

Central to the **Decades Lancaster** operation and taking up nearly half of the space, is a six-lane boutique bowling center. In addition to bowling, the venue provides guests with nearly 30 digital arcade games, ranging from SkeeBall to Donkey Kong and Hoops Fever, all built between 1975 - 2006; with Super Mario Part Two being the newest game in the space. There is no redemption, as it is being offered as fun, social gaming. A chef-driven menu offers a southern influence, with beverage options including signature designed cocktails, sommelier selected wines, and 24 craft beers on tap. "This was our imagination of what we think is the right mixture of games and food and bowling, with a focus on retro and nostalgia and fun that way," said Yeager.

The "T"-shaped colonial revival style brick building, with drill hall was used by the **United States National Guard** for many years as a training facility, storage of munitions and feeding of guard members. The **Lancaster Red Roses** professional basketball team from 1946 to 1949 and from 1953 to 1955 played their games in the Stahr Armory. Semi-Pro basketball and wrestling, along with circuses all played in the building. In 1982, the facility was firebombed. Live theater known as the **Theater of the Seventh Sister** took up occupancy for around seven years, starting in 1989. Two years later the facility was added to the **National Register of Historic Places**. More recently the venue was known as **The Stahr Center**, a public venue.

When asked about the 2018 renovation, Yeager said, "It was everything you see without all of this stuff. We left the walls the same colors. We left the gym floor where we could. The wooden roof was exactly as it was. It wasn't even touched. We tried to tie-in some of the colors from the ceiling down into this space." The only major modification was that the bowling lanes had to be built on top of part of the gymnasium floor. **US Bowling Corporation**, Chino, Calif. is the supplier of the half dozen lanes and ancillary equipment.

"We're very happy with where we are at. Like any business, we have to grow things here and there," said Trendler. Asked about impressions of first time visitors, Yeager said, "They're in awe when they come in because they're not really sure what's going on. They see these boardwalk-style lights when they walk in, and then they have no idea what is back in that area yet, until they walk back there. (referring to the bar and restaurant). So it's really cool to see that reaction."

Due to serving alcohol, the facility is 21 and over after 8:30 p.m. "We are very family-friendly though and encourage families to come in and experience what we are offering. It's a good time for everyone," said Trendler.

Analytics indicate Decades Lancaster is getting a daily regional draw from Hershey and Carlisle. "There have been a lot of people that have family in Lancaster and their families are joining them from Pittsburgh and D.C," said Yeager, (even as far as Colorado.) "Although places like this exist around the country, I feel like we've been getting really positive comments on what we put together, even if they have been to other similar situations. They like the extra level of thought we put into it, because it is so close to us. It's not like a chain, as this specific project is our baby. There's a lot of cool stuff in Lancaster. It is becoming more and more of a tourist destination. Make a weekend out of it and come and see us."

• **decadeslancaster.com**

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Vegas Superkarts puts a speedy amusement spin on Sin City

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LAS VEGAS — Sin City visitors seeking a pace and level of excitement greater than that generally found along the Strip can zoom up Interstate 15 to the city's far northeastern edge, where **Vegas Superkarts by Exotics Racing** (VSK) will place them in spiffy go-karts for an experience combining skill and racing thrills.

Located at the 1,200-acre **Las Vegas Motor Speedway** complex, the new attraction, billed as the city's longest and fastest outdoor go-kart racetrack, officially opened in mid-May following a preview period. It shares a lobby and café with, and is immediately adjacent to, Exotics Racing, which has offered driving and passenger experiences in more than 50 exotic cars — including models by **Ferrari**, **Lamborghini**, **Porsche**, **Aston Martin**, **Mercedes**, **Nissan** and **Corvette** — since 2009.

Cofounder **David Perisset** told *Amusement Today* that VSK fills a recreational gap in the market. "There was no real outdoor go-kart track in Las Vegas, and it was definitely a recurring question from our customers at Exotics Racing," he said. "Go-karts are just pure fun, and Vegas Superkarts is representative of who we are. Not only is it a great additional activity to our existing exotic car experience, it is also a fun alternative for local families and businesses."

Vegas Superkarts by Exotics Racing boasts a 2,100-foot-long asphalt track packed with sharp curves, hairpin turns and speed-gathering straightaways. According to a representative, almost 40 percent of the attraction's patronage is female. COURTESY VEGAS SUPERKARTS BY EXOTICS RACING

Sales have exceeded projections thus far, according to Perisset, and customer feedback has been "extremely positive." He is particularly pleased with the attraction's level of female patronage, which he said is approaching 40 percent. "That's higher than we anticipated and a fantastic thing! In motorsports in general, we are seeing a constantly increasing number of female racers."

Perisset pointed out that the track benefits from its dynamic layout and location. "Our go-karts reach top of speeds of over 40 mph around a track with a variety of straightaways and technical turns. The fact that it is located at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway adds to the racing atmosphere."

Designed specifically for go-karting by **Romain Thievin**, cofounder of Exotics Racing, the 2,100-foot-long asphalt VSK course features 14 turns (including hairpins), fast-acceleration straightaways and professional safety barriers by **Tecpro Barriers**, which supplies similar equipment for **Formula One** auto racing. It can accommodate up to 12 karts at time. The attraction has a fleet of **Sodikart** SR5 270 CC (single passenger) and 2Drive (driver plus minimum 42-inch-tall passenger) four-stroke gas engine vehicles, which are more powerful than the average indoor electric kart. The minimum driver height is 55 inches.

"It's the latest generation of gas engine go-karts," said Perisset, who noted that Sodikart's vehicles have an adjustable seat and pedals and a fully enclosed floor for optimal driver comfort. "Compared specifically to electric go-karts, the performance is in a different league, thanks to a much lower weight. Our go-karts are a lot more agile in the corners and have a much higher top speed."

Safety "has always been our top priority in our various motorsports activities" at Exotics Racing, Perisset emphasized. VSK's karts are equipped with a harness and a roll bar, and all moving mechanical components are covered to prevent injuries. Additionally, the vehicles are equipped with an electronic speed-control system that can be activated remotely by staff in case of erratic driving or an incident on the track. Customers must view a driver safety video prior to donning helmets and hitting the course.

"Our team is continuously trained for safety and operations, in cooperation with Clark County," Perisset said. "It benefits from cross-training with our exotic car driving experience, which has been operating safely for 10 years in Las Vegas and Los Angeles [at the **Auto Club Speedway** in Fontana, Calif.]. **Fred Johais**, who manages our go-kart activity as well as the operations at Exotics Racing, is a former go-kart racing champion: he has all the necessary knowledge to lead our team of experts and deliver the safest, most fun experience."

The VSK registration process doubles as a ticket to enhanced competitive fun. On their first visit, patrons are directed to a computer terminal to enter their information and build a racer's profile. For each session on the course, the racer's performance, results and lap times are recorded for instant access through Exotic Racing's website and / or VSK's app.

"You can monitor your progress and ranking versus the records of other drivers," Perisset said. "Every time you come to VSK, you enter a massive time trial competition." The digital dashboard also offers information about special racing events and new products.

In mid-July, VSK officially began offering junior go-karts by way of the four-stroke, gas-powered Sodikart LR5 model — enabling kids and tweens ages eight to 14 to drive (minimum height requirement: 50 inches). Considered the safest kart in the industry for children, the vehicle's steering wheel, in addition to its seat and pedals, is adjustable. The kart reaches a top speed of 25 mph.

"Adults cannot compete with kids at the same time, as the speed and weight difference would create a safety hazard," Perisset said. "Adult and junior go-karts therefore run separate sessions on the track, one after the other."

VSK offers memberships, bachelor party packages, on-site catering for corporate events, and group and private racing sessions for locals and out-of-town customers. It is the only course in Las Vegas to participate in the **Sodi World Series**, which hosts go-kart races throughout the year and around the world within its own network of tracks.

Said Perisset: "When you place colleagues, customers or friends in a fun and competitive environment, the opportunities to create memories are endless."

• **exoticsracing.com**

Base51 offers simulated racing with either high-definition wraparound video screens or virtual reality. COURTESY BASE51

Base51 brings high-tech racing to L.A.

HAWTHORNE, Calif. — Since early April, **Base51**, a new entertainment-and-dining venue in Greater Los Angeles, has been beckoning adults with a need for speed.

Located about six miles east of **Los Angeles International Airport**, the hip, higher-end amusement space uses multimedia technology to put guests "behind the wheel" of the world's fastest **Formula One** and **NASCAR** race cars on some of planet's most challenging tracks. The main room of the 4,500-square-foot facility features 10 fully networked, professional-level racing simulators by **CXC** — paired with high-definition video and virtual reality and programmed to race simultaneously.

Available in standard, advanced and pro settings, the experience, which includes a briefing and a five-minute qualifying session followed by the race, typically lasts about 15 minutes. After the race, drivers can compare their results with those of other drivers on a large video leaderboard, which also displays fastest-lap data and telemetry.

In addition to arrive-and-drive and corporate event-based racing, Base51 offers quality multicultural cuisine, a selection of wines and beer primarily from local microbreweries.

For additional venue information, as well as details on Base51's professional coaching and skills-enhancing Race Academy, visit base51.com

—Dean Lamanna

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson
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Thunder Road of Sioux Falls, Idaho, is planning to build a new indoor space to expand its offerings and extend its operations year-round. The major addition will be a 29,000-square-foot facility housing a new restaurant and more entertainment options including an eight-lane bowling alley, an arcade and indoor laser tag. The location already offers go-karts, miniature golf, bumper boats and outdoor laser tag.

"We try to make the place better every few years and the next logical step is to do an indoor facility," said **Al Novstrup**, president of Thunder Road. "That gives us an opportunity to go 12 months out of the year. It gives us an opportunity to deal with weather issues."

•

The well-known Coca-Cola logo will be going up on the soon-to-open **American Dream** retail-entertainment center in the New Jersey Meadowlands. The **Coca-Cola Company** and **Liberty Coca-Cola** beverages — the bottler for northern Jersey — have inked a 10-year partnership with the 3-million-square-foot **Triple Five** project adjacent to **Met Life Stadium** that's set to open in the fall.

Aside from being the official soft drink supplier at the property, Coca-Cola will host events featuring celebrity spokespeople, host a social media storefront, and operate Coca-Cola Eats, an 800-seat restaurant serving dishes and Coca-Cola products from across the globe.

"American Dream is a project like no other," said **John Mount**, Coca-Cola's vice-president of sports marketing and region assets. "Our diverse drink offerings matches well with the global audience American Dream will attract."

•

Urban Air Adventure Park has announced the grand opening of its new Kendall location in the Miami, Fla. area. Open seven days a week, the park hosts attractions ranging from virtual reality, a Sky Coaster, climbing walls, warrior obstacle course to Leap of Faith, Wipe Out and more. Urban Air Kendall also boasts free Wi-Fi and a full-service café.

"We are striving to provide the best and safest quality for family entertainment for everyone," said franchise owner **Haydee Carvallo**. "We are sure our guests will make many wonderful memories with their families here."

•

Despite the name, the developer of **Shindig** — an entertainment center scheduled to open this fall in Tuscaloosa, Ala. — envisions the multi-story facility as a family attraction, not a hangout.

Owner and developer **Steve Williams**, local officials and local partners in the project celebrated an official groundbreaking in June at the construction site where the steel framework of the building is taking shape. The $6-million, 51,000-square-foot facility is scheduled to open in October 2019.

The entertainment center began as plans for a bowling alley more than a decade ago, but has grown into a venue with multiple attractions.

"This has evolved into a family entertainment center. What we are about to build is something that Tuscaloosa has never seen before," stated Williams.

The FEC will have 20 regular bowling lanes, a separate eight-lane VIP bowling area, laser tag and miniature golf, a 4,000 square-foot video game arcade, ax throwing, pool tables, pinball machines, and a 3,000-square-foot music hall space. Williams envisions parents enjoying arcade games or live music on the upper level as they watch their children have fun on the ground level.

•

In November 2019, the **Linq Promenade** in Las Vegas, Nev., will welcome **Icebar**, a brand-new project created by **Noel Bowman** of **Minus5 Ice Experience**. Replacing **Sprinkles Cupcakes** next to the Promenade's fountain, Icebar will offer frozen ambience and frosty cocktails familiar to fans of Minus5, while also featuring new, immersive features such as dynamic projection mapping.

"We know this coveted location will be attractive to leisure visitors strolling the Promenade, as well as corporate groups utilizing the nearby convention facilities, including the new **Caesars Forum**," said Bowman.

Construction on Icebar began in early July, transforming the existing space. The majority of the space will be devoted to the ice attraction, which will be 1,200-square-feet and encompass more than 100 tons of hand-carved ice. The space is maintained at 32-degrees Fahrenheit by a state-of-the-art refrigeration system.

•

Karting Miami at **Dezerland Park** in Miami, Fla., officially opened in July. Karting Miami is the first indoor electric go kart track in South Florida, and is the latest addition to Dezerland Park, North Miami's ever-expanding indoor entertainment experience.

Karting Miami offers the latest in electric racing technology on two tracks (adult and junior) totaling more than 80,000-square-feet. The facility features an all-new fleet of 21 adult — and 6 junior-sized — open-wheeled EcoVolt NG+ go karts from **BIZ Karts** powered exclusively by lithium ion batteries which produce zero emissions.

•

Virtuality Gaming Den opened in June in Sioux Falls, Idaho. It offers more than 50 different games including educational, escape rooms, exercise and meditation.

There are five different rooms inside Virtuality. There is a racing area with several race car rigs offered in one room. There is a room called "virtual chamber" where four different VR headsets are setup with the various games. The "free-roam" room allows up to three different players to battle zombies. Finally, there is a room dedicated to video game consoles with six different TV screens and dozens of chairs.

•

No Surrender Adventure Park indoor family entertainment center opened at Sierra Vista Mall in Clovis, Calif., has added a new two-story ropes course.

"We're always looking to expand and bring new and exciting attractions to our facility for our community to come in and have fun with their friends and family," said General Manager **Austin Samuelian**.

The new course covers 864 square feet and safety is top priority.

"We do have a staff member who is up there at all times who will watch over and survey the children. We have a stop play word. So if you yell the stop play word that lets the attendant know you need some help and they will come out and assist," said Samuelian.

Ohio's capital prepares to welcome a unique Scene75

Nuclear Rush, an SBF/Visa Group spinning coaster, courtesy of Rides 4 U, will be part of the new Scene75 opening soon in Columbus, Ohio. COURTESY SCENE75

COLUMBUS, Ohio — In what's set to be one of the largest family entertainment centers in North America, Scene75 is opening soon in Columbus. The facility will feature laser tag, arcade games, escape rooms and more.

In a first for Scene75, the location will boast an SBF / Visa Group spinning coaster. Rides 4 U brokered the deal which will bring the coaster, Nuclear Rush, to the 220,000-square-foot facility.

With bounce inflatables, three escape rooms, archery tag and an esports arena for gaming tournaments, the Central Ohio location is a new experiment for Scene75. The FEC will occupy the anchor space of a mall, replacing a former Macy's location.

The $15 million attraction will feature a magic-themed dining area, full-service restaurant and three bars.

San Diego County Fair attendance down, midway revenue up

AT: *B. Derek Shaw*
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DEL MAR, Calif. – With one more day this year, final attendance at the fifth largest fair in North America clocked in at 1,531,199, down from 2018's total of 1,561,236. (The record run was 1,609,481 fairgoers in 2016.) The 340-acre **Del Mar Fairgrounds** which houses the **San Diego County Fair** opened Friday, May 31, was hindered the first weekend by highway repair from a bluff collapse that occurred in April. The repairs to one of the main entryways to the grounds were not completely finished until the Tuesday after opening weekend.

Another culprit seemed to be the weather. "The famous "June Gloom" (gray overcast skies common to San Diego County this time of year) hung around a lot longer than usual. We usually get our biggest attendance days when the gloom is over and the inland temperatures rise. Gray skies stuck around well toward the end of June, which seemed to have an impact," said **Katie Mueller**, Deputy General Manager.

This year's theme was "Oz-some!" (in Spanish, "FabulOza!"). It was selected to celebrate the Wizard of Oz book series by **L. Frank Baum**, who wrote some of his 14 books in San Diego County. The grounds were completely themed with entryway/exits and other key points throughout the fair with the magical theme. Even the SDCF workers and carnival ride operators were donned in gear sporting the 2019 theme logo.

"By far, the highlight was the fair theme. We carried the Wizard of Oz theme throughout the fair and throughout the grounds, from our Marketing billboards/TV commercials/etc. to the giant Emerald City archway over the main entrance gate to décor in individual exhibits. Competitive Exhibits had fair theme divisions, which entrants embraced, expressing themselves in photography, art, jewelry, woodworking and more. Food vendors came up with fun and unique theme offerings, such as Flying Monkey Caramel Corn and Emerald City lemonade. Special entertainment told the Oz stories through puppetry, song and music. More than 4,000 people posed with the Fair Mascot, a tin woodsman named Nick Chopper," said Mueller.

The San Diego County Fair features a picturesque location with the ocean in the background. A new ride on the Fun Zone midway was Insomniac (above left), manufactured by Tivoli Enterprises/AM Tech and brought in by Helm & Sons. The Colton, Calif. operation had a total of 17 rides at the fair. A Reverchon Crazy Mouse (above right), brought in by SJ Entertainment, carried 101,233 riders during the fair's run.
COURTESY STEFAN HINZ

The San Diego County Fair is the third largest independent midway fair, behind the **State Fair of Texas** and the **Minnesota State Fair**. It has maintained an independent midway since 1985 with 17 different independents bringing in a total of 77 rides: 41 in Kid Zone (Kiddyland) and 36 in the Fun Zone (Main Midway). The operators, who brought in anywhere from one ride to 21 rides (brought in by Ray Cammack Shows) included: **Alamo Amusements**, **B Thrilled Amusements** (Blake's Concessions), **Bishop Rides**, **Caprice Entertainment**, **Fun Attractions**, **Helm & Sons Amusements**, **Joy Rides**, **Kastl Amusements**, **Kastl Entertainment**, **Outside Amusements**, **Prime Pacific Entertainment**, RCS, **Rose's Rides**, **S. J. Entertainment** (Vander Vorste), **Southern Force Rides**, **Talley Amusements** (also as: **State Fair Spectaculars**, **Tom Talley**) and **Wood Entertainment**.

Rides making their first appearance in Del Mar included three kids' rides all from Helm & Sons and in the Kids Zone: Chopper Hopper, (**Majestic Mfg.**), Crazy Dumbos, (**Kolmax Plus**) and Firehouse (Kolmax Plus). Also new for 2019, in the Fun Zone, Endeavour (**Zamperla, Inc.**) was brought in by RCS and Insomniac was brought in by Helm & Sons (**Tivoli Enterprises/AM Tech**).

Since the top grossing ride information was not finalized at press time, the rides with the most riders included: The Big Wheel (**Lamberink**), Ray Cammack Shows, 108,642 riders; Crazy Mouse (**Reverchon**), S&J Enterprises, 101,233 riders and Sky Ride (**Garaventa CTEC,** now known as **Doppelmayr**), RCS, 106,973 riders. Ride midway revenue was just over $8,577,194, up 2.4% over last year's edition.

"Every year we look to this time, when school gets out. We see an increase in attendance and obviously revenue. On those good sunny days we usually compete with the beach. We've had our fair share of folks and it's just getting better. We've brought a pretty good arsenal of rides but what is new are the games. We've got quite a few more games," said **Chris Lopez**, Vice President, RCS.

In advance of the fair, fair staffers took a theme-branded pop-up booth to street fairs and festivals in April and May, giving out ticket vouchers and fair information. Special promotions during the fair included Pay One Price Ride Days, offered

See SAN DIEGO, page 31

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Flavor Company Dance Entertainment of La Mesa, Calif. (left), was one of the colorful and fun strolling entertainment groups that performed during the 27-day fair. Some of the nearly 45 San Diego County Fair staff (center) are shown attending the one-hour daily briefing each day of the fair at 11:30 a.m. There were three access points to the Kids Zone midway, including the overhead option via the Garaventa CTEC Sky Ride (right). AT/B. DEREK SHAW; COURTESY STEFAN HINZ

SAN DIEGO

Continued from page 30

Wednesdays and Thursday in June for $38. It was hugely popular and helped get a young crowd on the grounds mid-week, allowing unlimited access to Fun Zone (adult rides) and Kids Zone, noon to 8 p.m. Also five dollar discount coupons were available with a qualifying **Aquafina** purchase at any **7-Eleven** store.

School Staff Appreciation Days, presented with partner **Mission Federal Credit Union** offered up to four $1 admission vouchers for anyone who worked at a school – teachers, office staff, janitors, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc. The vouchers could be redeemed at the box office on any of four Fridays of the fair, the same day as Kids Days. That program was available for children 12 and younger who were admitted free those days and included special entertainment and contests. This year more than 33,000 children came on those days. "As an example of how well this works, 10,587 children came on Friday, June 28, and the next day (a Saturday), 6,562 children attended — approximately 40-percent more on Kids Day than on a weekend day," said Mueller.

Another way kids 12 and under were able to get free admission was through the SDCF reading certificate program. Now in its 16th year, kids who read 10 books leading up to the fair, verified by a teacher or librarian, presented their certificate at the admission gates for free admission. The program began in 2004, when their fair theme was "Seusscentennial," working with the family of the late **Dr. Ted Geisel** (Dr. Seuss), who lived about 10 miles south of the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

The fair also offered promotions to attendees south of the border as Mueller explains, "A huge part of our attendance base comes from Mexico, which is about 30 miles from the fairgrounds. We have marketing team members who are wholly dedicated to getting the word out in Tijuana, Mexicali, Ensenada and other parts of Baja California."

One of the challenges this year was the E. coli outbreak that occurred during the middle of the run. Seven children contracted E. Coli. One 2-year-old passed away. An investigation is underway by both the **California Department of Food and Agriculture** and **San Diego County Health and Human Services**. It is believed a commonality between all cases is that they spent some portion of time in the animal areas. The San Diego County Fair immediately shut down all animal exhibits and eliminated all animal interaction following the report on June 28, 2019.

Some of the new food items that debuted in 2019 included, Buffalo Chicken Chimichanga and Deep-Fried Crème Brulee Balls, **Chicken Charlie's**; Caramel Crunch Cinnamon Roll, **Country Fair Cinnamon Rolls**; Spaghetti Donuts, **Pignotti's Gourmet Italian**; Original Cardiff Crack BBQ tritips, **Seaside Market**; Sangria Wine Slushies, **Turtle Rock Ridge Winery**; and Octoco (Octopus Taco) and Octopus on a Stick, **Reno's Fish & Chips**.

Every night featured top quality entertainment. A few highlights were **Pitbull**, making his first appearance at the SDCF. He had high ticket sales with good crossover appeal between Hispanic and non-Hispanic audiences. **Toby Keith** was back, providing high ticket sales and great attendance. **Lindsay Stirling** was the surprise of the season. "Based on comp ticket requests, we did not expect a big audience, but this concert had a huge same-day walkup of fans who had seen her modern take on the violin on **YouTube** and other social media," said Mueller. **Los Tigres del Norte** was the highest-attended grandstand show. This popular Mexican band is often on their entertainment lineup, pulling in huge crowds.

The best positive change this year was the use of the Fun Pass electronic ride ticketing system brought in by RCS. This program enabled guests to upload ride and game tickets to a smartphone app or card, which was then scanned at the ride or game. "It has been very, very well received," said Lopez. Fair officials were also quite pleased with the system.

RCS and the 16 other independents have maintained a great relationship with the fair board. "We love being out here. Why wouldn't you want to be out here – beach front property, the fairgrounds is beautiful, the staff and the partnership that we have with the San Diego County Fair. It's a great one and we're all pulling in the same direction. We absolutely love being here!" said Lopez.

The 2020 fair ran Friday, June 5 – Sunday, July 5, closed Mondays in June.

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MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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He headed up two fairs in four months. After five years at the helm of the **San Bernardino County Fair & Event center (SBC)**, Victorville, Calif., General Manager/CEO **Geoff Hinds** left at the conclusion of the **SBC Fair** to take over the top spot of the 320-acre **Deschutes County Fairgrounds and Expo Center**, Redmond, Ore.

"Leaving the High Desert will be difficult, but I'm leaving the fairgrounds in very good hands," said Hinds, 39, in an article in a **Daily Press** account. "I worked this fairground as a teenager, left and came back so this place is home to me. Leaving here will be like leaving family."

The year's SBC Fair ran May 25 through June 3 with **Helm and Sons Amusements** providing the midway rides. The July 31 through August 4, **Deschutes County Fair** had **Davis Shows NW Inc.** offering the ride package.

•

Many carnival operators are charitably minded, however it's rare that people hear about their efforts. In late May, Jefferson City, Mo., was hit by a devastating tornado that damaged much of the town, including the Training for Life Campus of **Special Olympics**. One afternoon during a 10-day still date at the Capital Mall, **Kenny's Funland** invited all Special Olympians to come out and ride for free. At the same time, the public was also invited to ride when the carnival is typically not in operation. A portion of the proceeds went back to Special Olympics in Jefferson City. "All [the Olympians] seemed happy and excited, and we raised a bit of money too," said **Kimberly Maple**, co-owner of the La Feria, Texas, show along with husband, **Johnny Maple**.

•

The **Delaware State Fair**, Harrington, now has a limited-edition license plate motorists in the state can purchase commemorating the fair's 100th anniversary. In April, the **Delaware Department of Motor Vehicles** began offering the plates, with restrictions. In mid-June, Senate Bill 42 expanded the opportunity for individuals or businesses to display these tags on any car, truck or trailer weighing less than 26,000 pounds.

The fair draws an estimated 300,000 people annually. It occurred July 18-27 with **Wade Shows, Inc.** as the midway supplier.

•

The **California State Fair,** Sacramento, partnered with **Dish Network** to present a series of drone light shows by **Great Lakes Drone Company (GLDC)** to **Cal Expo** during the fair, July 12-28. Drones with swarm technology, illuminated the night skies featuring choreographed music, visuals and patterns. The show replaced traditional fireworks, taking place at the **Miller Lite Racetrack Grandstand**. The visuals created were seen two-three hundred yards away.

"Our team is working diligently to bring new and exciting forms of entertainment to the California State Fair," said **Rick Pickering**, Cal Expo General Manager and CEO. "For over 165 years, the state fair has been a place to showcase innovation." Drone light shows are considered to be more environmentally safe and inclusive to families and those who have sensitivities to loud explosions created by traditional fireworks. **Butler Amusements** handled the midway operations.

•

Maureen Freniere recently joined **the Eastern States Exposition**, West Springfield, Mass., as Event Sales Coordinator. Previously she worked at **FarmTek**, South Windsor, Conn., where she served as a commercial trust specialist. Freniere has spent much of her career in the agriculture field. Previously, she served as the livestock director for **Hampshire College**, Amherst, Mass., where she trained students to raise livestock that in turn ended up supplying 40-percent of the meat that was served through campus dining services.

As event sales coordinator, Freniere is responsible for securing new partners, opportunities and events to be held on the campus of the Eastern States Exposition.

"I grew up here, showing with the American Milking Shorthorn Society and with 4-H. ESE means so much to me," Freniere said. "It was a part of my past, and I'm excited that I now get to be part of its future."

The Big E takes place Sept 13-29, with **NAME** providing the midway attractions.

•

Many eastern Pennsylvania fairs faced weather challenges in 2018 due to an excessively wet summer. So much so, one fair will not have any rides or midway vendors during its August 5 -11 run. Organizers of the **Reading Fair**, Leesport, Pa., say they will focus on the agricultural aspect of the fair, temporarily eliminating midway vendors and rides. Previously **Houghton Enterprises, Inc.** provided the rides for the seven-day spot which ran August 5-11.

"Coming out of last year, we had very low attendance, primarily due to weather," said Brett Treichler with the Reading Fair in a **WFMZ-TV 69** report. "There were some other factors involved, and financially, we couldn't really run all three rings of the fair this year."

Another nearby fair, the **Schuylkill County Fair**, Summit Station, Pa., also endured torrential rain three weeks before the fair, flooding the lower portion of the site. Rather than cutting the 16 rides that **Goodtime Amusements, LLC**, Hellertown, Pa., brings in, the fair cut its $80,000 entertainment budget in half.

"All fairs and events must stay current with the trends affecting their local areas. One way that the Schuylkill County Fair has been meeting that burden is by conducting on-site exit surveys and utilizing post-event web-based surveys to gather market data from our customer base. Our customer base equally attends our fair for the carnival midway, the food midway, our stage entertainment and our track events," said Paul T. Kennedy, president. The fair ran July 29 – Aug. 3.

•

The **United States Postal Service (USPS)** in late July unveiled four new forever stamps at the North Dakota State Fair, Minot. The colorful, whimsical artwork — one scene across four stamps — celebrates the fun of America's state and county fairs. The far left stamp shows farmers unloading produce behind a white fence. In the second stamp, a child holding a chicken sits atop the same fence, with carnival rides — a Ferris wheel and merry-go-round — in the background. Those rides can be seen in the third stamp, where some fairgoers admire the livestock behind the fence while others walk, balloons in hand, toward a sweets stand. The last stamp shows children at the stand buying treats from the vendor.

The State and County Fairs stamps are being issued as forever stamps, always current in value to the USPS first-class mail one-ounce price.

WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▸ Tuzla Marina Aquapark Waterland — page 34 / Newsplash — page 36

WhiteWater West spaces out with Infinity Racers

Schlitterbahn Galveston Island sets record for head-first mat slides

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

The enclosed tubes set a record for longest mat slides in the world — 696 feet. Boasting the ride's stats and records, signage sets the stage for Infinity Racers on the tower ramp (right). AT/TIM BALDWIN

GALVESTON, Texas — Following on the heels of an award-winning and record-breaking Master Blaster slide, Massiv, in 2017, **Schlitterbahn Galveston Island** contracted with Canada's **WhiteWater West** once again for a high-profile attraction.

"**Ron Sutula**, General Manager at Schlitterbahn Galveston Island, called me with an intriguing ride idea — to add a unique, thrilling slide onto an existing tower that had a previously removed attraction, said **Pat Finnegan**, vice president of business development, WhiteWater.

Sutula

"Ron and I both love riding on slides headfirst on a mat, so we used our shared affinity for that as an inspiration. That's how Infinity Racers was born! We're very proud of how this incredible pair of slides have turned out, and how much guests are already loving them."

Not content to simply do multilane racers — of which many are already seen throughout the Houston area — Sutula pondered what could be different.

"I wanted to do something unique. We had space available at the top of the tower," said Sutula. "I wanted something head-first and totally enclosed."

Seeking records, Sutula had WhiteWater confirm that 696 feet long (each slide) would indeed be the world's longest mat racer. The height of 75 feet/ eight stories was also a record. These stats are conveyed through colorful signage on the spiraling ramp to the top of the tower. Each slide has translucent detailing. Colorful rings work beautifully, but Sutula wanted each slide to have a different experience.

"I asked if they could put in something other than the circular pattern and do something different by design," said Sutula. "They asked for my ideas, and I wanted something linear, sort of a warp speed effect. And guests love it. They come down smiling."

Using an existing tower was a significant savings as not only was a launch point already in place, but the plumbing to that level was also there.

"All we had to do is increase the pump motor to get more flow as we were adding a second slide," he said.

As riders take the journey, they encounter several sections of the translucent design down the long waterslide. Infinity Racers gives a nod to the space program just up the road in Houston. A spacey purple is used for the mat color.

"The ride is really a blast! I didn't think I would enjoy it as much as I did!" said **Winter Prosapio**, corporate director of communications, **Schlitterbahn Waterparks**. "Seriously, I don't usually get into mat rides, but this one has a great experience."

Something else new in the park is completely different than waterslides — chicken tenders.

"Chicken tenders is one of our top sellers in the park. In the last few years we've had plain, barbeque and spicy," said Sutula. "Those are popular, but our food and beverage director decided he wanted to venture into other things. He had a contest to not only open it up to food employees, but everyone. We had about 14 different entries for different kinds of tenders."

New this season are Buffalo Blue, Asian "Thai Me a River" (sweet chili sauce), Sweet Heat (sweet sriracha) and All American (peanut butter and bacon).

"We've increased sales by 40 percent," Sutala laughed.

The park has also implemented a valet parking service this season. Sutula reported that it has been a well-used program, particularly on the weekends ($20 weekdays/ $25 weekends). Although the park continues to offer free parking, they have also debuted a premium lot for a charge for those choosing to park in the closest spaces.

Schlitterbahn Galveston has also offered three grand cabanas that seat up to 24 people among their cabana rentals. They run $500 per rental, but Sutula stated they are very successful as many families would rent three cabanas in the past, and the grand cabanas are a better value. They repeatedly sell out each weekend.

New creatively crafted chicken tenders have boosted sales by 40-percent. AT/TIM BALDWIN

With the recent acquisition of the park by **Cedar Fair**, Sutula is optimistic about the potential growth in the years ahead. Future development has already been in discussion.

Splashway opens world's first dueling blaster waterslide

AT: *Jeffrey Seifert*
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SHERIDAN, Texas — **Splashway Waterpark & Campgrounds** opened, on July 15, Dueling Splash Blaster, a ride that combines several of **ProSlide**'s most popular slide features into a pair of dueling slides. ProSlide has installed a number of uphill rocket coasters, including rocket coasters with exciting high-speed turn saucer sections. Recent installations have seen RallyPoint slides where riders share the same slide tube with a low divider between them so that riders in adjoining slides can see their racing competitor as they traverse a common tube.

Now, for the first time ever, all of those technologies are combined into a dueling, mirror-image slide pair that brings together aspects of all three types of slides: uphill water-propulsion launches, side-by side racing and mirror-image saucer high-speed curve sections. It is the world's first dueling splash blaster water coaster, and fittingly it's being introduced in the state of Texas, where uphill water coaster technology was born in 1994.

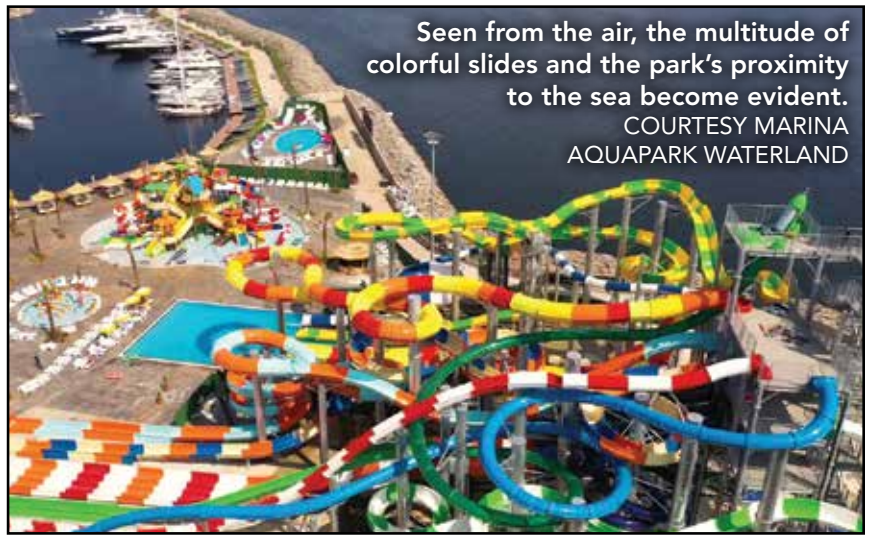
▸ See SPLASHWAY, page 36

COURTESY SPLASHWAY WATERPARK

Water park adds to offerings at Tuzla Marina on the Mediterranean

AT: *Jeffrey Seifert*
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

The children's play structure features a variety interactive elements and multiple slides.
COURTESY MARINA AQUAPARK WATERLAND



Seen from the air, the multitude of colorful slides and the park's proximity to the sea become evident.
COURTESY MARINA AQUAPARK WATERLAND

ISTANBUL, Turkey — One of the most anticipated water park projects in Istanbul opened to the public on June 23. **Tuzla Marina Aquapark Waterland** is located at the **Tuzla Viaport Marina**, a modern yacht club/marina located in the eastern suburbs of Istanbul. The marina was designed to attract tourists and private yachts cruising the Mediterranean and features upscale restaurants, shopping, a bowling center, game center, cinemas, the **Viasea** amusement park, **Viasea Aquarium**, **AslanPark** big cats zoo and the **Timsah Park** reptile zoo. The complex is located on the outskirts of the city, away from the hustle and bustle, but close enough to draw from its large population.

Turkey is no stranger to water recreation. Surrounded by the Mediterranean, Aegean, Marmara and Black Seas, Turkey's coastline extends more than 5,000 miles. The coastal areas of the country have been home to civilizations dating back to the bronze age. Owing to increased security campaigns and advertising, tourism increased dramatically in the last two decades, peaking at more than 41 million visitors in 2014, making Turkey the sixth most-visited country in the world. The country's vast array of resorts along with museums, historic sites and archeological sites have contributed greatly to its appeal as a tourist destination.

Tuzla Marina Aquapark Waterland is touting itself as the largest water park in Istanbul. Built on 15,000 square meters of land, it is also Europe's first water park to be integrated with a yacht club and marina. Its 12 waterslides, wave pool and water playground were supplied by Turkey's own **Polin Waterparks**. In addition to the water park, 15 water sports are offered in the waters of the marina ranging from relaxing, such as Pedalo (pedal boating) to extreme, including: jet skiing, wakeboarding, snorkeling, and flyboarding. Multiple speed boat tow line apparatuses are also available. For individuals there are water skis, kneeboards and parasails. Groups of thrillseekers can share the excitement on a variety of multi-person rafts: Airstream, Banana, Bandwagon, Ringo, Side Kick and Sonar.

The water park features a nice mix of raft and body slides. As with all Polin products, the slides are brightly colored and feature translucent bands or sections to produce a dizzying array of light effects. Thanks to Polin's resin transfer molding (RTM) process, the slides should stay bright and colorful for many years to come.

Some of the high-profile slides include a looping rocket with drop capsule. Guests enter the drop capsule — claiming to be one of the tallest in Europe — from the tallest ride tower situated 24.5 meters (80 feet) off the ground. Once released, thrillseekers encounter a near vertical drop and a sidewinder element in an enclosed tube. The slide finishes with another steep drop in an open tube before depositing guests into a long water-filled runout.

A combination Black Hole+Turbolance has guests aboard two-person rafts winding through dark tunnel tubes with lighting effects before bursting into daylight and dropping into the Turbolance section. From there, the rafts plummet down a steep slope, climb up a wall on the opposite side, then once losing momentum, slide back down the wall, over a speed bump and into the splash pool.

Another raft ride, an Uphill Navigatour, features four downhill drops and four uphill water blast sections before entering a double helix that sends riders screaming into the splash pool finale. Other slides include a multi-drop Kamikaze, rafting slide, and a large combination Flying Boats+Rafting Slide+Black Hole. Body slides include the racing two-piece Windigo, Tunnel Freefall and an Aquatube. In a remarkable use of space, all 13 adult slides share the same slide tower.

Smaller guests have plenty to choose from as well. Separated from the adult slides is a kids' water play structure standing in a shallow pool. The multi-level play structure has plenty of interactive splash and play elements including a tipping bucket and other spilling devices. Waterslides of various lengths offer just the right amount of excitement for thrillseekers in training. The entire area is surrounded by a multitude of reclining lounge chairs with umbrellas so parents or responsible adults can keep a watchful eye on their dependents.

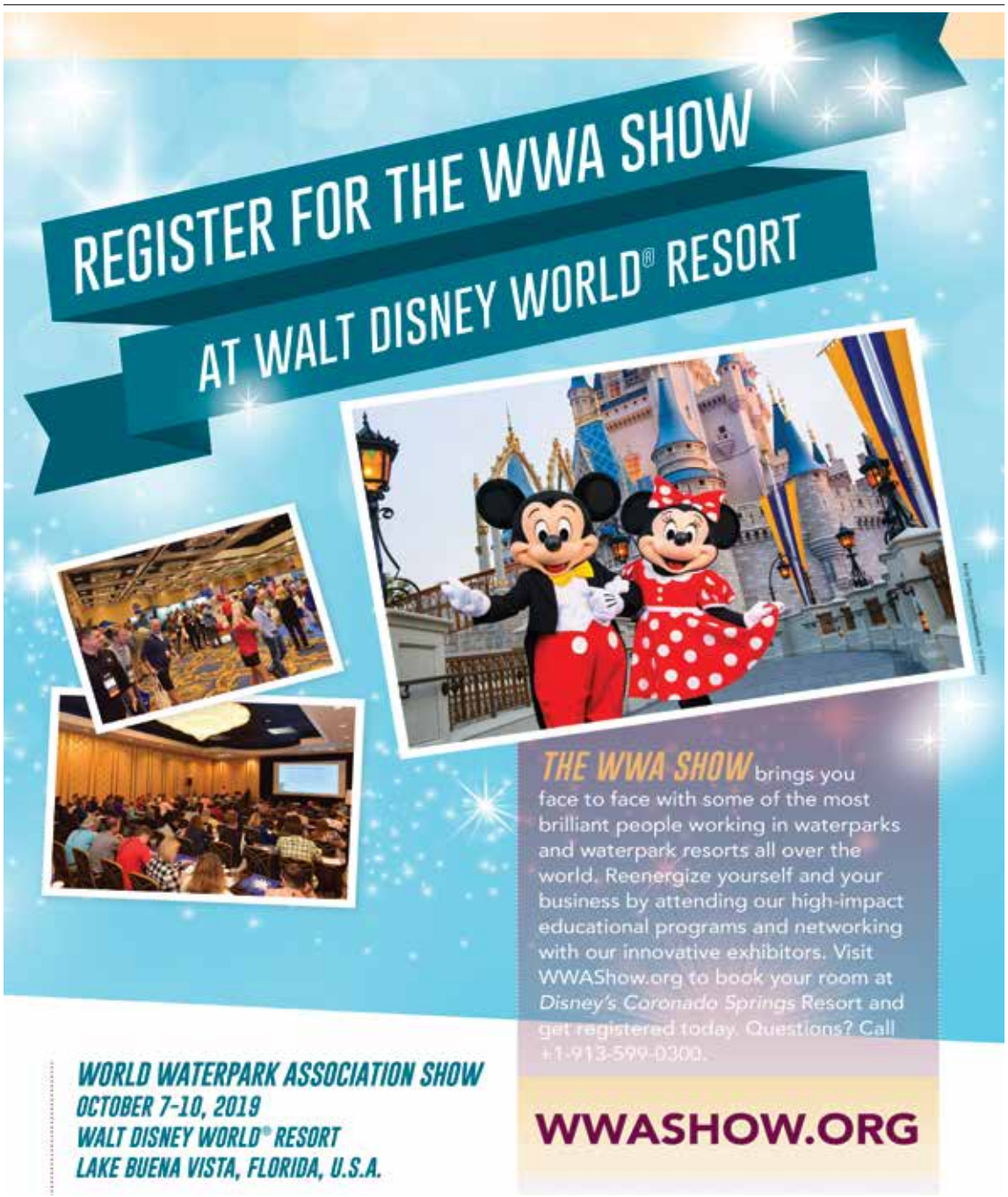
A separate splash pad is designed for even smaller tykes. Several apparatuses offer gentle sprays of water atop a soft permeable coating with no standing water to minimize the chance of injury. Like the larger kids' area, it too is surrounded by lounge chairs with umbrellas.

A wave pool and a deep-water adult pool round out the remaining water attractions. Situated throughout the park are plenty of lounge chairs and seating areas with umbrellas. Private cabanas are available for rent.

The park plans to host various activities and parties throughout the year including DJ performances, balloon parties and foam parties.

The realization of Tuzla Marina Aquapark Waterland was through a collaboration of **ABM Grup**, Polin Waterparks and **Futura Form**.

•marinaaquapark.com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Beach Park in Brazil is home to the undisputed king of water thrill rides. Insano, certified by **Guiness World Records**, as the world's tallest waterslide, is considered one of the park's extreme attractions. The 14-story slide takes just four to five seconds to plummet down, and riders hit speeds of 65 mph before rocketing into the fast approaching splashdown pool. Realizing that such an extreme slide might not be for everyone, Beach Park created the Virtual Insano, a waterproof 4D virtual reality simulator where people can experience the real Insano feeling without having to actually go on it. Guests can have the same free-falling sensation and even the water on their back. It's a virtual inclusive water attraction where anyone, including elderly, small kids or people with disabilities, can have the sensation of riding on the world's most extreme waterslides. The scenery is a small replica of Insano's tower, so besides the feeling of water and the virtual reality, the ambience and the immersion is raised to another level. The virtual ride can handle three times more guests than the real Insano) and can operate with only two employees. It also helps to drive attendance by entertaining a large variety of people. "Our goal is to make all the guests happy and be a part of the game," said **Clarisse Machado** of Beach Park.

•

Lion Country Safari, Loxahatchee, Fla., has expanded its current water play area in the 55-acre **Safari World** amusement park to include a new 10,568-square-foot water attraction. The park broke ground for the project last August, and the expansion opened this past July.

The new water play structure is set in a pool up to 20 inches deep. It features a number of interactive elements, including dump buckets, water cannons, and water slides. For a touch of whimsy, the largest tipping bucket is zebra-striped. From the waterplay structure guests can see the first section of the safari drive-through park where tapirs and alpaca roam.

"You can be hanging out on the pool deck and still see animals," said park spokeswoman **Haley Passeser**. "Once people are finished exploring the adventure park and they're ready to cool down, this is their opportunity," she added.

The zero depth pool entry is accessible for most guests and the new attraction, nearly three times the size of the previous water play area, can accommodate up to 300 guests. Admittance to the new water attraction is included with paid admission to Lion Country Safari.

•

Guests to **Kings Dominion's Soak City** water park were given one last chance to enjoy the park's wave pool over the Independence Day holiday weekend. The park's social media pages announced "Wave goodbye to Big Wave Bay," and "We're making waves for something new," followed by the hashtag #KD2020. Big Wave Bay had been a staple at the park since its installation in 1999. The wave pool is now closed for the remainder of the season.

•

A new splash pad opened in the town of Carthage, N.C., just in time for the summer heat. **Splash Moore**, located in **Hillcrest Park** (in Moore County) opened on July 10 to much fanfare and included a ribbon cutting ceremony by county dignitaries who provided the funding. Commissioner's Vice Chairwoman **Catherine Graham** actually gathered under the big tipping bucket with a group of children to partake in the first dousing. Construction on the 7,000-square-foot splash pad began in February after commissioners voted unanimously last November to award a $282,000 contract to build it. The splash pad is part of a larger $5.29 million investment that will include a 26,500-square-foot recreation center, new parking, and an additional baseball diamond to the park. Hillcrest Park opened in 2001 with four baseball diamonds.

•

Weather and construction delays caused the **River Rapids Waterpark** in Sainte Genevieve, Mo., to miss its planned June opening, but the park did open on July 12 during the heat of the summer. The water park was the final expansion phase of the park at the Ste. Genevieve Community Center. Expansion started in 2015 with a baseball field. A playground and tennis courts were added a year later. A county sales tax increase in 2017 created the necessary funds for the water park expansion. Groundbreaking took place May 2018 with the hopes of having the water park completed one year later.

Attractions at the water park include a combination lazy river with wading pool, four-lane mat racer, a body slide, tube slide, speed slide, six-lane lap pool with a one-meter spring diving board, zipline, climbing wall, party areas, and concessions.

A multi-level children's play area is separated from the adult attractions and includes two enclosed body slides, a pair of kiddie racing slides, plenty of interactive water elements and a tipping bucket.

NEWSSPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

The massive seven-story waterslide at Splashway Waterpark and Campground in Sheridan, Texas, features dueling chutes that race rafts two at a time, flying saucers with high-speed turns and water blasts that propel rafts uphill.
COURTESY SPLASHWAY WATERPARK

SPLASHWAY

Continued from page 33

"This opportunity arose when we were looking to create something really special with our research and development, and Splashway was looking to raise the bar again for their guests," said **Ron Smegal**, chief commercial officer, Proslide Technology.

The ride begins from atop a 70-foot tower. Once aboard the two-person rafts, riders encounter a small dark section before entering a RallyPoint for a side-by-side race. After that interaction, they take off in opposite directions to encounter the first pair of saucer sections. Riders meet up again for the first uphill blast, then split once again in separate tubes leading into the mirror-image saucers. This time, however, the saucers curve riders toward each other, bringing the riders back together at a rally point. The action continues as riders race and rally, then take off into separate directions eventually meeting up at the splashdown finale.

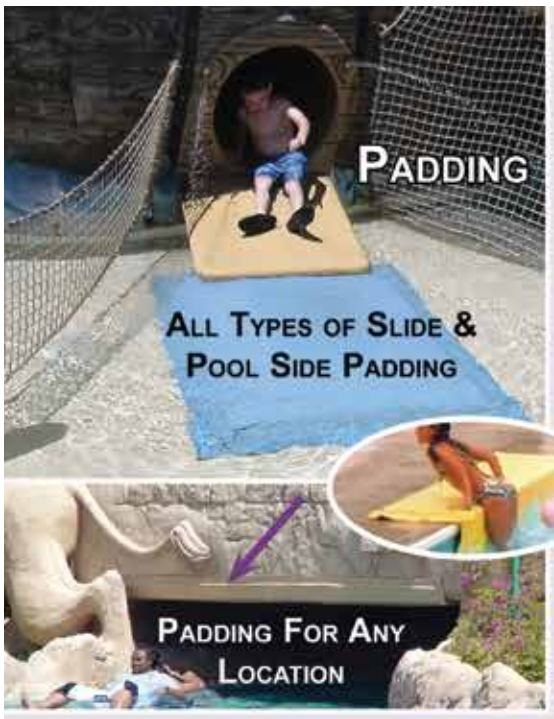
The 1,650-foot long ride offers three uphill blasts, three high-speed saucer sections and an enclosed tube spiral. The two chutes are intermittently open and enclosed, separate and joined as the action continues throughout the bright yellow and blue chutes.

Children at least 42 inches can ride as long as the combined weight is at least 150 pounds. Two other high-profile waterslides at the park, Loco Mona, a ProSlide Tornado 24 hybrid, and Ray's Riptide, a ProSlide Tornado Wave, require riders to be at least 48 inches. This gives the opportunity for smaller children, approximately ages five and up, to experience the thrills and excitement of one of the "grown-up" slides.

Splashway Waterpark and Campground opened in 1998 and has continued to expand. Located within an easy drive of three major metropolitan cities — Houston, San Antonio and Austin, it is very popular with the camping and RV crowd. The campground offers everything from deluxe cabins that can sleep up to 10 guests to cozy cottages for five, RV sites with hookups, or a basic tent site for those looking for an economical stay.

Although the water park is the primary attraction, guests can also enjoy a miniature golf course, laser tag, volleyball court, playground, live entertainment, outdoor movies, kayaking, paddleboating and fishing.

• splashway.com



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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

▸ New amusement attractions come to Biloxi — page 40 / *Women of Influence*: Katie Dean — page 43

Rave reviews for new beer garden at Lagoon Amusement Park

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

There are two restaurants in Lagoon Amusement Park's new Biergarten, both adorned and themed to a Bavarian village. COURTESY LAGOON AMUSEMENT PARK

FARMINGTON, Utah — Two years in the making, **Lagoon Amusement Park**'s new Biergarten that opened the first of June for the 2019 season is serving up 20 different beer flavors as well as some traditional German foods.

So far, guests are enjoying the new Bavarian-themed village and restaurants where visitors may also find plenty of continental food fares.

"The area has been very well received," said **Adam Leishman**, park spokesperson. "It is really a nice addition to our park."

This is not the first time the Utah park has served beer on the grounds. In fact, beer has been served at the park since its beginnings in the 1880s. When it first opened, the park was described as having a swimming area, a dance hall and a saloon. During prohibition, alcohol sales disappeared but then reappeared sometime later when the park had a tavern located near the grandstands where some of the most popular bands played during the 1960s and 1970s. The tavern shut down in 1979.

"We have always maintained a liquor license," Leishman said, "but this is the first time we have sold alcohol on the grounds like this since the 1970s."

The new beer garden is situated where a theater called Music USA once stood. It is near the midway providing easy access for visitors. It is just south of the park's original wooden roller coaster. The theater was closed two years ago. Park officials have been working on the right fit for the park since.

It is a large area that includes two separate restaurants, a smaller one with grab-and-go service and a larger one which provides more of a restaurant-type feel. The smaller restaurant has 20 taps and the larger has two, 20-tap areas.

In addition, there is a large outdoor area that surrounds the restaurants with a variety of seating. In one area, there is a small version of the famous Hague Fountain in the Netherlands.

Most of the beer served is locally brewed. In fact, Leishman said 16 to 18 of the 20 taps at each location are local. **Unita Brewery** created a special beer and named it Lagoona Beer.

"We are the only place where you can get that beer," Leishman said. "A group of us spent the winter sampling beers and making recommendations."

Even though it has been several decades since beer has been served in the park, alcohol has been allowed in the picnic areas. Lagoon Amusement Park allows guests to bring in their own food and drink for picnics. In addition, the convenience store in the campgrounds makes it available to campers.

Guests aren't allowed to bring food or drink into the beer garden nor are they allowed to leave the garden with their food and beer bought in the garden.

Fleishman said the beer garden may provide the park with a year-round space for events.

"This is something we are looking at but not formally at this time," he said.

The beer garden was the big addition at Lagoon Amusement Park this season, however, there are two new live entertainment shows this season.

Lagoon Amusement Park is located just about 10 miles outside Salt Lake City. It includes almost 60 rides in the Rides & X-Venture area, the water area (Lagoon A Beach) with slides, hydro tubes, waterfalls and bubbling fountains, and Pioneer Village. In addition, there are event and show spaces throughout the park.

• lagoonpark.com

FAST FACTS

Opened
early June
•
Two separate restaurants
•
Smaller restaurant has
20 beer taps,
16 to 18 local beers,
grab and go restaurant
•
Larger restaurant has
40 taps (2 locations)
16 to 18 beers per location are local
•
Lagoona Beer
served at both locations, made by local brewery Unita
•
Outdoor seating

Lagoon Amusement Park opened its new Biergarten at the beginning of June with a special ribbon cutting ceremony. COURTESY LAGOON AMUSEMENT PARK

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Gourmet burger joint Black Tap 'shakes' up Downtown Disney

AT: *Dean Lamanna*
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

Actor-singer Vanessa Hudgens helped welcome Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes to Downtown Disney District on May 18 — even braving the eatery's Strawberry Shortcake CrazyShake. The menu includes the Greg Norman Burger (shown), made with high-quality beef from the Japanese Wagyu cattle breed. COURTESY BLACK TAP ANAHEIM (HUDGENS); AT/DEAN LAMANNA

ANAHEIM — **Disneyland Resort**'s **Downtown Disney District** is offering at lot more than the old hamburger-and-fries theme park standby with the arrival of **Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes**.

Since its official debut on May 18, the first California outlet of the international brand has been drawing lines of patrons hungering for its gourmet and vegan burgers, extreme CrazyShake milkshakes and craft beers. Among the special guests attending the grand opening were actor-singer **Vanessa Hudgens** (best known for Disney's *High School Musical* film series) and costume characters Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse and Goofy.

Black Tap has created a unique concept for its Disney location, introducing an enhanced fast-casual service style. The 185-seat restaurant offers an atmosphere akin to a classic luncheonette of the type found in New York City, where the Black Tap concept originated in 2015, but for the first time, orders are taken at the counter and then delivered to guests' tables. Additional menu items can be ordered from a restaurant team member once guests are seated.

"We have been completely thrilled to see the excitement and warm welcome we've received since opening our doors here," said **Chris Barish**, Black Tap owner. "This is truly the first of its kind, with restaurant features never seen before, and a completely different dining experience — all within the magic of the Downtown Disney District."

The menu features Black Tap's juicy burgers, including the All-American Burger and the award-winning **Greg Norman** Burger (named after the Australian pro golfer), with extra-flavorful beef from the Japanese Wagyu cattle breed, house buttermilk-dill dressing, blue cheese and arugula; signature chicken items such as the Baja Chicken Sandwich and the award-winning Spicy Korean BBQ wings with sesame seed and scallion served with buttermilk-dill dressing; and a variety of sides, including French fries and Brussels sprouts.

Marking another first, Black Tap in Anaheim features a Shake Window where guests can order CrazyShakes to go. The milkshake selection includes Cotton Candy, the chocolate-laden Brooklyn Blackout and the pretzel-spiked, M&Ms-encrusted, peanut butter cup-studded Sweet n' Salty. The newest addition, Strawberry Shortcake, starts off as a strawberry shake with a vanilla-frosted rim topped with crumbled cake and a strawberry shortcake ice cream bar — all before being crowned with a pink twisty pop, whipped cream, strawberry drizzle and a cherry.

With custom art designed by local street artist **Jason Woodside** and retro neon signage adorning the interior, **Patrick Finnegan**, vice president of **Disney California Adventure** and Downtown Disney District, described Black Tap as "a dining experience that is both incredibly delicious and stunningly photogenic."

•blacktap.com

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COURTESY BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH

The Boulevard luxury hotel opens at Blackpool Pleasure Beach

BLACKPOOL, England — **Blackpool Pleasure Beach**'s multi-million-pound investment program continues with the summer's eagerly awaited opening of the luxurious Boulevard Hotel.

Not only is this high-end property located nearby the popular Icon roller coaster and Golden Ticket Award winning Valhalla (Best Water Ride 2015-2018), but it also is positioned on Ocean Boulevard, adjacent to Blackpool's golden sands, with views of the west coast sunsets.

The $15-million Boulevard Hotel comprises 120 stylish rooms, including eight junior suites, two park view suites and eight coastal suites, all with either coastal vistas or direct views of the attractions and rollercoasters. All boast custom artwork complemented by materials sourced from renowned British companies, including handmade furniture by **Tetrad**, **Designers Guild** fabrics and wall coverings by **Andrew Martin**.

•**blackpoolpleasurebeach.com**

Magic Memories signs with Pirates Dinner Adventure

ORLANDO — **Magic Memories** has signed a new partnership with **Pirates Dinner Adventure** in Orlando, to offer guests personalized content that captures their evening.

With an indoor lagoon and full-size pirate ship, Pirate Dinner Orlando offers a blend of family fun, daring duels, comedy and romance for an adventure on the high seas. The new partnership sees Magic Memories take ownership of the attraction's existing in-house photo operations and use its digital image capture design and technology to bring a new dimension to the guest experience.

"Our show is famous for its interactive nature so we really wanted to offer guests an innovative memory-making platform that allows them to feel like part of the show long after the curtain has gone down," says Pirates Dinner Adventure General Manager and Vice President **Dan Falls**.

"After seeing Magic Memories' technology in action, we knew they would be the perfect partner to help us deliver a compelling media solution."

Through personalized content, visitors are able to relive key moments during their interactive evening, including jumping aboard the pirate ship or striking a pose while walking the plank.

"Pirates Dinner Adventure Orlando is a truly one-of-a-kind experience that has been entertaining guests for many years," stated **Mike Weber**, vice-president of North American sales for Magic Memories.

"By partnering with a specialist in experience capture, the attraction will be able to tap into the huge consumer demand for personalized content and ensure guests can bring their most exciting moments to life. We are introducing our new mobile platform this summer to the attraction which will enable us to further improve and extend our engagement with guests."

Multiple new amusement attractions bring excitement to Biloxi, Miss.

AT: *Pam Sherborne*
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

BILOXI, Miss. — It seems amusement attractions are finally finding their way back to Biloxi and **Jerry Creel,** director of the Community Development Department for the City of Biloxi, couldn't be happier with what he is seeing.

Creel said a new bowling alley has opened as has a laser tag venue and a new state-of-the-art movie theater. **Margaritaville Resort** opened in 2016 and plans for an expansion including an amusement park have now been approved by the city council.

Fun Time USA, an amusement park once located in Gulfport, Miss., but destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, will be reborn in Biloxi.

"The new attractions will bring in tourists as well as more people moving to the area," Creel said.

He hasn't seen so much activity since the category three Hurricane Katrina slammed into the coastal areas on Aug. 29, 2005, on the border of Mississippi and Louisiana with Biloxi and Gulfport, Miss., taking the brunt of the 120 mph winds and a storm surge of up to 28 feet.

Dennis Tynes is one of the developers and partners of the new Fun Time USA.

"The original Fun Time was owned by the O'Neal family in Gulfport for 27 years," Tynes said. "They wanted to reopen, but they needed some help."

So several business people stepped in to do just that. Tynes said **Ray O'Neal** is now the chief park consultant.

"He is making sure the new Fun Time USA keeps the flavor of the old one," Tynes said. "His nephew, **Rafe O'Neal**, will be the general manager and proprietor."

The new park will sit on 7.7 acres on the peninsula of Biloxi. The original park was more of a family entertainment center with bumper boats, bumper cars, miniature golf and go-karts. The new facility will have all those things plus amusement rides.

The entire list of rides has not been completed, but Tynes said the rides they are ready to purchase include: the Spider, manufactured by **Eyerly**; Tilt-A-Whirl, by **Larson International;** Sky Fighter, **Chance Rides**; **Hampton** kiddie cars; a Chance carousel and some classic **Allan Herschell** rides.

Other rides will be announced at a later time, but Tynes said they do have plan at some point to install a steel roller coaster.

Extensive landscaping is planned in the park. And they even plan to bring back the big green dinosaur that once loomed over guests entering the Gulfport location.

Construction is set to get underway this fall with a completion date sometime in mid-2020.

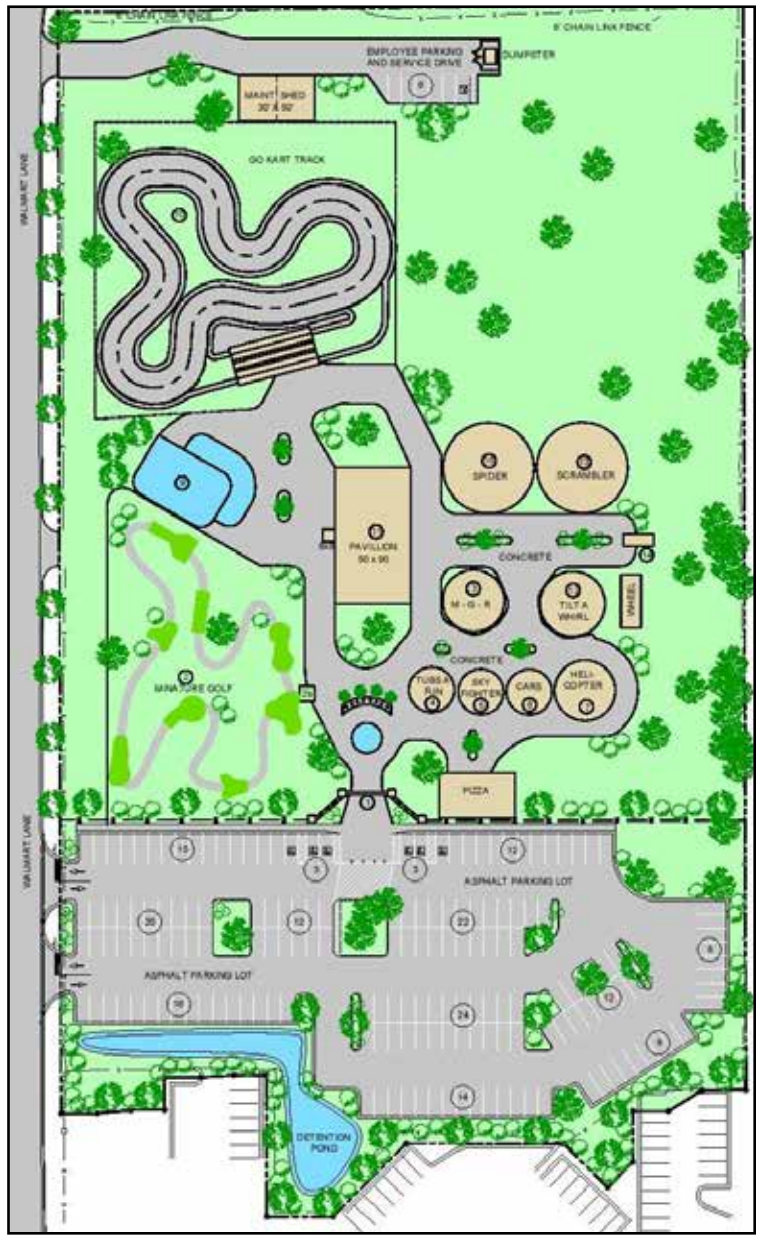
Margaritaville Resort, the restored site of Casino Magic, is a 373-room resort opened in 2016. It had been abandoned after Hurricane Katrina.

Creel said developers there plan to build an amusement park and giant arcade. The resort already has some water attractions.

"Because they are having to actually expand the footprint of the building, they had to go before the city planning commission and, once approved there, on to the full city council," Creel said.

That all has been done now. Planners of the expansion didn't respond to *AT*'s calls so details weren't available. However, local news agencies have reported that the park will feature a floating bar. Creel said a large wheel also is coming.

"The overall project for the amusement park and updates to the hotel have been estimated to cost $134 million," Creel said.



The proposed site plan for the new Fun Time USA, Biloxi, Miss. The original Fun Time USA was located in Gulfport, Miss., but was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The rides shown in the drawing may or may not be the actual rides on the grounds when it opens. Construction will begin this fall, and completion is expected in mid-2020.
COURTESY FUN TIME USA

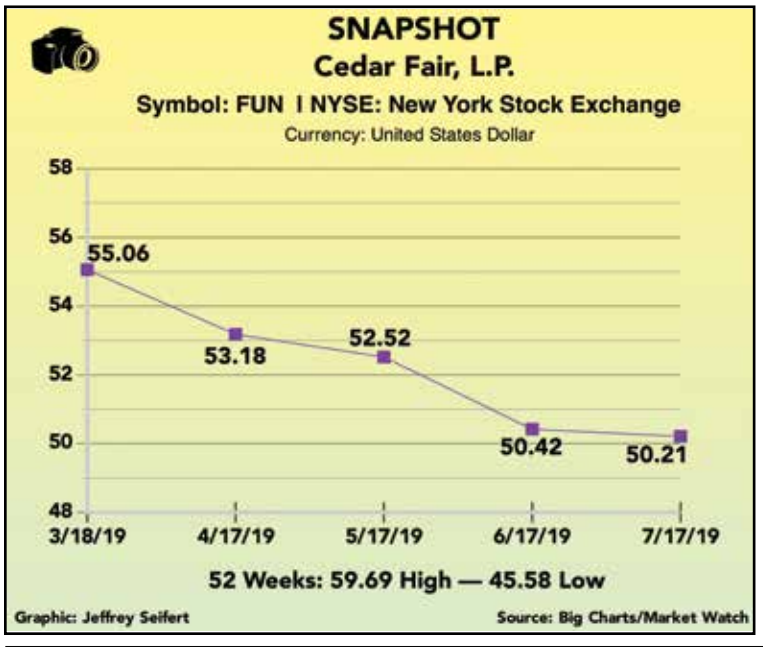
MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 07/17/19	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	45.28	47.93	26.88
Merlin Entertainments Group / Legoland	UK:MERL	LSE	449.60	451.50	304.40
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	50.21	59.69	45.58
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	44.43	45.26	32.61
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	142.57	145.43	100.35
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.21	0.39	0.17
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	74.99	80.75	62.75
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	4105.00	4345.00	2855.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.27	2.04	1.18
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	7.14	8.30	5.45
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	28.86	31.66	21.61
Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A.	ES:PQR	MCE	13.72	14.00	9.84
Royal Carribean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	111.76	133.60	89.48
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	1190.00	2160.00	1022.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	33.41	34.72	21
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	53.65	72.39	46.68
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	698.00	710.00	590.00
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL	ASX	2.75	3.9	1.82

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: ASX, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; **SZSE**, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; **TSEC**, Taiwan Stock Excange, Corp.; **TYO/TSE**, Tokyo Stock Exchange

—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S)	As of 07/15/19	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	$3.080	-$0.188
Midwest	$2.956	-$0.215
Gulf Coast	$2.805	-$0.199
Mountain	$2.975	-$0.395
West Coast	$3.209	-$0.247
California	$3.952	-$0.016

CURRENCY

On 07/18/19 $1 USD =	
0.8913	EURO
0.8051	GBP (British Pound)
108.15	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9878	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4262	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3060	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Cedar Fair revenues climb through holiday

SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Co.** (NYSE: FUN) reported preliminary net revenues through July 7, 2019, of approximately $579 million, an increase of $16 million, or three percent, when compared with the same period a year ago. In other company news, Cedar Fair, with its subsidiaries **Magnum Management Corp.**, **Canada's Wonderland Co.** and **Millennium Operations, LLC**, announced its intention to commence a private offering of $500 million aggregate principal amount of senior unsecured notes. It intends to use net proceeds for the proposed acquisition of **Schlitterbahn Waterpark and Resort New Braunfels** and **Schlitterbahn Waterpark Galveston** in Texas and the purchase of the land under **California's Great America** in Santa Clara, Calif., among other purposes.

Eldorado Resorts buys Caesars for $8.58B

LAS VEGAS — **Eldorado Resorts** has acquired casino resort and attractions operator **Caesars Entertainment Corp.** in a transaction worth about $8.58 billion. The deal, still being finalized as *Amusement Today* went to press, reportedly makes the merged entities the largest gambling company in the U.S., with a total of 60 casinos in 16 states. Retaining the Caesars name, the combined company will be led by Eldorado's management team and its main operations will be based in Reno, Nev. Holdings of Caesars in Las Vegas include the **Bally's** and **Rio** properties, both offering **Monster Mini Golf** venues and other attractions, as well as the entertainment promenade **The Linq**, which features the High Roller observation wheel and FlyLinq zipline.

Lego purchases parks, Madame Tussauds

BILLUND, Denmark— **The Lego Group**, maker of the famous toy brand, has teamed with investors to buy U.K.-based **Merlin Entertainments**, operator of the **Legoland** theme parks, **Legoland Discovery Center** chain and **Madame Tussauds** wax museums, among other attractions. **Kirkbi Invest** partnered with private equity firm **Blackstone** and the **Canada Pension Plan Investment Board** in the deal, in which the investors have formed a company that owns 50 percent of Merlin. Lego sold the Legoland parks to Merlin in 2005.

In brief...

•The **City of Buena Park** in Southern California is battling over the Beach Boulevard construction site of **Butterfly Palladium** (*Amusement Today*, March 2019). As of this past spring, the delayed project near **Knott's Berry Farm** appeared to have stalled. Alleging breach of contract, Buena Park filed a lawsuit in late March against the attraction's developer in an effort to buy back the former site of the **Movieland Wax Museum** for the $2.5 million the developer paid the city for the property.

•**The Coca-Cola Co.** and its North Jersey bottler, **Liberty Coca-Cola Beverages**, inked a 10-year deal with **American Dream**, the massive **Triple Five Group** retailtainment center opening Oct. 25 in East Rutherford. As official soft drink supplier, Coca-Cola will host celebrity events and operate an 800-seat restaurant in the complex.

•St. Louis-based cashless technology supplier **Intercard, Inc.**, has officially partnered with **Pinnacle Entertainment Group** to serve the arcade / FEC market by providing each other's clients with cashless technology and consulting services. Intercard also has joined the **Bowling Proprietors' Association of America**'s Smart Buy program as the cashless technology provider for bowling entertainment centers. Its current clients include **Cinergy, Main Event Entertainment** and **Round One Entertainment**.

• **The London Resort**, a 535-acre theme park resort tentatively set to open in 2024, has entered into a partnership with **Paramount Pictures**. The studio joins **BBC Studios** and **ITV Studios** in the project and will avail its catalogue of popular films for IP-based attractions.

ON THE MOVE

Cedar Fair unitholders elect three to board

Ruisanchez

Sandusky, Ohio-based Cedar Fair Entertainment Co. announced that its unitholders elected Carlos A. Ruisanchez and re-elected D. Scott Olivet (Audit Committee) and John M. Scott, III (Compensation Committee, Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee) to the board of directors of its general partner, Cedar Fair Management, Inc., for three-year terms expiring in 2022. Ruisanchez is a finance and entertainment executive with more than 25 years of experience. Most recently, he served as president and CFO, and board director, of Pinnacle Entertainment, Inc., a leading regional gaming entertainment company, until its sale last October. Prior to joining Pinnacle, he served at Bear, Stearns & Co. as senior managing director — responsible for corporate clients in the gaming, lodging and leisure industries.

Seth E. Alberts has been promoted to president of **Ralph S. Alberts Co., Inc.** Alberts, who joined the Montoursville, Pa.-based company in 2005 as director of sales and marketing after earning a degree in accounting and management from the **University of Kentucky**, succeeds his father, **Ed Alberts**, who will remain active on the board of directors. Seth Alberts is a third-generation owner of the custom molded foam and plastics business, which his family founded in 1963. Previously, as the company's vice president, he led day-to-day operations, which enjoyed revenue growth of more than 60 percent through an expansion of product lines and industries served.

Alberts

Jerry Battista has joined **Betson Enterprises** of Carlstadt, N.J., as national parts sales manager. In the newly created role, he will focus on directing the parts sales process and sales training as well as positioning products and services. Additionally, he will be responsible for expanding Betson's parts sales and supporting the current customer network. Previously, Battista was a top sales performer for organizations in the insurance, telecommunications and travel industries, where he outperformed sales goals. He also managed sales teams and implemented best practices programs that enhanced overall sales execution.

Battista

India-based **Semnox Solutions, LLC**, a provider of automated technology to the leisure and entertainment industries, has welcomed **Brian Duke** as senior client partner. An amusement industry veteran with more than 35 years of experience at major companies including **Nintendo** and **Capcom**, plus many startups, he has helped bring innovative products to the U.S. market. Duke spent the last eight years in the debit card system sector, working primarily with **Sacoa Playcard**, for which he helped set up sales operations and marketing strategies in the U.S.

Duke

Former **Parques Reunidos** CEO **Fernando Eiroa** has been tapped as CEO of **CircusTrix**, a Provo, Utah-headquartered developer, operator and franchisor of indoor active recreation centers and trampoline parks. He will lead a company that has a network of more than 320 locations — both owned and through its franchise partners — in nearly 20 countries, hosting more than 40 million visitors annually. Eiroa succeeds **Case Lawrence**, who founded CircusTrix in 2011; the company now is home to the **Defy**, **Sky Zone**, **Rockin' Jump**, **SuperFly** and **Ryze** brands. At Parques Reunidos, Eiroa led the company to its IPO in 2016 and revenue of more than $650 million last year. Earlier, he served for nine years as president and CEO of **Palace Entertainment**, a U.S.-based subsidiary of Parques Reunidos.

Eiroa

Anthony Esparza has joined **Carnival Cruise Line**, a subsidiary of **Carnival Corp.**, in Miami as chief of guest experiences, vice president. He previously served in creative and development executive positions with **Landmark Entertainment Group**, **Paramount Parks**, **Herschend Family Entertainment** and, most recently, **SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment**. At SeaWorld, Esparza was a key part of the company's post-*Blackfish* documentary turnaround — establishing a new culture across its parks with a development group called Deep Blue Creative. He also created SeaWorld's Digital Wonders initiative, a digital experience platform that explored and executed several in-park virtual reality attractions.

Esparza

As part of **Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group**'s push to expand its global footprint via third-party IP offerings, the company has appointed **Eric Grilly** executive head of studio alliances. In the newly created role, Grilly will work to develop business opportunities with Hollywood studios, IP providers and other strategic license owners to bring their content to the live entertainment stage. The position builds on Grilly's work as CEO of **VStar Entertainment Group**, which was acquired by Montreal-based Cirque du Soleil in 2018, and comes on the heels of his partnerships with **Nickelodeon** and **NBCUniversal** to produce original touring shows, including "PAW Patrol Live!" Cirque du Soleil currently has 20 productions playing worldwide.

Jadeja

Sohansinh Jadeja has been named president of the **Indian Association of Amusement Parks and Industries** (IAAPI). Jadeja, a civil engineer with more than 28 years of experience in amusement and water parks, is director of **Gujarat Amusement & Funworld, Ltd.**, which owns and operates **S. Cube** water park and **Gujarat Funworld** amusement park in Vadodara, India. He previously served as director of **Saya Group of Companies**, which pioneered in the field of manufacturing rides and waterslides while operating amusement parks and water parks in the Indian state of Gujarat. Jadeja joined IAAPI as director in 2005 and has served as chairman of the western region and chairman of the membership committee.

Jadeja

In announcing that it has obtained exclusive rights to license and manufacture the award-winning **Wiegand-Maelzer** SlideWheel, the world's first rotating waterslide, **WhiteWater** has welcomed **Rainer Maelzer** to its team. Maelzer brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in waterslides and water parks. With his contributions, WhiteWater hopes to continue driving innovation — creating more exciting and unique products that combine thrills with the highest standards of quality and safety for which the Canadian company is known.

Maelzer

Toronto-based **Cineplex** has appointed technology executive **Shawn Mandel** to the position of chief digital and technology officer. With proven experience in monetizing the value of data through analytics, Mandel will lead the company-wide digital, product and IT strategies to drive innovation across Cineplex's film entertainment, amusement and media sectors. He joins Cineplex from **Telus**, where he most recently served as chief digital officer. Mandel has built agile teams and fostered digital transformation — particularly as it relates to enhancing corporate culture and guest experience. He also serves as a mentor with the **Techstars Toronto Accelerator**, supporting the next generation of Canadian innovation leaders.

Mandel

Chris Perry is bringing more than 20 years of global theme park experience to **Royal Caribbean Intl.** in the newly created role of vice president, operations — private destinations. Based in Miami, Perry is now overseeing hospitality and managerial operations while providing input on the design and best practices for the line's private destinations, including the attractions-based **CocoCay**. He joins the company's hotel operations team from his most recent position as CEO of **Icon Global Partners, Ltd.**, an amusement industry operational consulting and management firm. Before Icon, he worked for **Club Med**, **WhiteWater** and Dubai-based **Jumeirah Group**'s **Wild Wadi Waterpark**, helming the latter attraction for more than a decade.

Perry

The Neon Museum of Las Vegas recently hired **Bruce Spotleson** as vice president of fund and partner development. In this role, he will be driving corporate and individual support for the organization. Spotleson has had a distinguished career in the city, most recently serving as director of corporate partnerships for **Vegas PBS**. Previously, he was group publisher for **Greenspun Media Group**, where he was instrumental in the launch and development of numerous local publications focused on the community. Spotleson currently sits on the executive committee of the **Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce**.

Spotleson

Ex-F1 driving champ motors to Gardaland

Former two-time Formula One World Champion racecar driver Emerson Fittipaldi recently paid a visit to Gardaland in Verona, Italy, accompanied by his wife, Rossana, and their children: Vittoria, eight, and Emerson, Jr., 12. The family enjoyed the park's rides, including the Jungle Rapids and Mammut, a Vekoma mine train roller coaster.
COURTESY GARDALAND RESORT

Women INFLUENCE

Katie Dean

Co-Founder
Joyland Amusement Park
Lubbock, Texas

A view from the top...

Katie and **Jimmy Dean** founded **Joyland Amusement Park**, Lubbock, Texas, in 1973. They purchased a small park there known as **Mackenzie Park Playground**, which had originally opened in the 1940s. It had 13 mostly kiddie rides in desperate need of some tender loving care. The Deans grew the park slowly but surely. Today the park boasts 30 rides and attractions with a seasonal payroll of more than 100 people. It is also one of a handful of family-owned amusement parks still operating in the U.S. today.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- **Member, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), since 1973**
- **Members, Family Owned and Managed Amusement Parks (FOAM), since 1973**

Celebrating her 100th birthday is a joy for Joyland's founder

LUBBOCK, Texas — Katie Dean turned 100 on July 21. When asked what plans she had for her birthday, she said, very adamantly: "I'm going to Joyland."

Then, she added: "I am looking forward to that. We'll have cake there."

And she did go, too. She welcomed her 100th birthday surrounded by family and friends at the amusement park she and her husband founded in 1973. Many of those there she has known for a long time. Some were former employees who are now visiting the park with their grandchildren. She mentored many of them.

Yet there will be some loved ones missing. Her husband and partner, Jimmy Dean, passed away in 1993. Her close, dear friends, Paul and Alethea Roads, founders of Wonderland Park in Amarillo, Texas, are both gone now as well, she said. He died in 2003 and she in 2016.

And while memories can sometimes lead to sadness, Katie Dean certainly doesn't seem to dwell on those details.

"I have great memories," she said.

It isn't as easy for her to get to Joyland these days due to a hip injury she sustained last February. But her injury hasn't stopped her from calling the park often, speaking with her son, David Dean, who runs the park with his wife, Kristi.

"The first question I always ask is how is the weather, because everything is dependent on that," she said.

Up until her injury, Katie Dean was at the park three days a week, greeting guests and making sure business ran smoothly.

"After my dad was gone, she was here every day, every day, for many years," her son said.

Joyland Amusement Park greatly shadows the small amusement park that once stood the grounds. The Deans were in their 50s when they purchased it. That was a big leap for them.

At the time, they were living in Amarillo. They owned two arcades located in two separate malls and they owned several rides. The rides had been placed at Wonderland, Cliff's Amusement Park, Albuquerque, N.M., and Funland, Wichita Falls, Texas.

They had spotted the small park a few years before and had been keeping an eye on it. When it went on the market, they sold the arcades, sold the rides, and Katie Dean transferred her job at the Texas Department of Transportation from Amarillo to Lubbock. And they hit the road.

"It just felt like an opportunity," Katie Dean said. "The previous owner had a loan so we just assumed that loan. I'm not sure we really knew what we were getting ourselves into."

Her son had a somewhat different opinion of the move.

"I wasn't at all sure about this park," said David Dean, who had just graduated from high school when his parents purchased it.

"I thought, 'what are we doing?' I didn't want to move to Lubbock at all. But, there we went."

It was hard work, but they were used to it. They had been working hard since they married in 1943.

Early in their marriage, Jimmy Dean joined the army and served two years in Germany during World War II. When he returned, he held a variety positions in a variety of industries. He kept striving to find a fit that would allow him to be his own boss.

"There were so many new things going on then after the war," Katie Dean said. "The war had limited what was available."

Plus they had two young children. Their daughter, Mary Dean Haiduk, was born in 1948, and their son, David Dean, was born, in 1954.

One move they made while living in San Angelo, Texas, proved to be a choice that changed their lives and opened a door to the amusement business. The passion only grew from there.

That move was the purchase of a Dairy Queen franchise, one of the first in Texas. That was where they met the Roads.

"Paul Roads loved soft serve ice cream," said David Dean. "He was working out at the air force base (Goodfellow Air Force Base, San Angelo) at the time. Every day on his way home from work, he would stop and get some ice cream."

From then on the two couples were fast friends, traveling the world together over the years. When the Roads decided to move to Amarillo, Texas, to open Wonderland Amusement Park, it wasn't too long before the Deans moved there as well.

It was in Amarillo where Katie Dean got her job at the transportation department, ending up keeping that job for 20 years. Amarillo was where the Deans invested in the two arcades and the rides. And it was during that time they spotted that little park in Lubbock; that little park that seemed to keep calling, "I think I can. I think I can."

"I know how my mom feels about this business," her son said. "When you stop and look back at the years, you see that it isn't just about business. The amusement park brings people together and brings smiles and it goes on for generations," he said. "That is irreplaceable. That is why everyone works so hard."

Later when Katie Dean was asked what was her favorite part of the amusement industry, the son sure knows the mom well.

She said: "The great memories and all the people we have met and all the friends we have made."

—Pam Sherborne

Reflections ON FUN

AT: Lottie Minick

A lofty historical perspective

One morning in 1976, my husband, **Bob Minick**, and I, along with our friend **Frank Thompson**, the son of **Disneyland**'s first comptroller, **Charlie Thompson**, were checking our respective departments at (pre-**Six Flags**) **Great Adventure** theme park in Jackson, N.J. Bob and Frank oversaw operations, while I managed games.

Bob radioed Frank and me suggesting we take a spin on the park's 150-foot-tall **Schwarzkopf** Giant Wheel. It was an hour before the gates opened.

After we met at the ride, an operator waved us into a car, rotated us to the top and momentarily stopped the wheel. High above the southern New Jersey Pine Barrens, we could see the site formerly known as **Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst** (now **Lakehurst Maxfield Field**) about 15 miles to the southeast. It was where the German zeppelin Hindenburg caught fire and crashed on May 6, 1937.

Bob noted to Frank that I'd recently been reading about the tragedy. And it occurred to me, as we gazed introspectively at the airfield's massive hangars in the distance, that our elevated vantage point offered a view similar to the one enjoyed by the passengers of the ill-fated vessel as it approached Lakehurst for landing.

In that moment, the modern machinery of amusement whirled us back to an evolutionary period in air travel technology. And it reminded me that the wheel of history never stops turning.

Lottie Minick is a 45-year attractions industry veteran and co-owner of Dallas-based Minick Associates, a design firm founded by her late husband, Bob. Her monthly column features behind-the-scenes anecdotes of her own and from those who have worked in the business. Got a fun industry story? Email lottie@minickassociates.com.

RWS Entertainment Group, ILMEX Illumination partner

NEW YORK — **RWS Entertainment Group** has launched an ongoing partnership with the designer and manufacturer of light displays, **ILMEX Illumination**. Headquartered in Spain, ILMEX transforms ordinary locations into attractive destinations for events, holidays, festivals and more. RWS and ILMEX will collaborate to produce customized experiences with innovative designs and advanced technologies for activations year round.

Best known for the extraordinary light displays produced for seasonal festivals and holidays, ILMEX has created activations all over the world for hotels, retailers, municipalities, concerts, corporate offices, iconic monuments, airports and theme parks. Prior to launching this partnership, RWS had previously collaborated with ILMEX on holiday experiences for Six Flags Great America holiday shows and Kettering Hospital's mission-driven lighting activations across ten locations. Now as partners, RWS and ILMEX seek to create immersion through illumination, delivering experiences unlike any other, whether it is Spring, Summer, Fall or Winter.

"We look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts with ILMEX Illumination in an official capacity and on a larger scale in order to produce the ultimate activations," said Founder and CEO of RWS Entertainment Group, **Ryan Stana**. "With the introduction of new technologies and interactive elements, our partnership will transform these unique lighting activations to an entirely new experience for guests."

• **rwsnyc.com**

VR ROUNDUP

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

For the first time this summer, virtual reality (VR) players have been able to step inside the Halo universe and compete in a full-motion, free-roaming VR experience during Halo: Outpost Discovery weekend events. Redmond, Wash.-based **VRstudios**, in collaboration with **343 Industries**, has developed Training Grounds, which enables event guests to participate in player-vs.-player combat exercises within simulated environments. Guests play as Spartan drones in untethered, multiplayer VR in three-person teams, with matches taking place on a close-quarters combat platform engineered to challenge various disciplines such as squad-integrated coordination strategies, spatial awareness in the battlefield and real-time weapon tactics improvisation.

Remaining event locations and dates: **Donald E. Stephens Convention Center**, Chicago, Aug. 2-4; **George R. Brown Convention Center**, Houston, Aug. 16-18; and **Anaheim Convention Center**, Anaheim, Aug. 30-Sept. 1. Visit halooutpostdiscovery.com for details.

•

Ocean Park Hong Kong has added VR to its 203-foot-tall **S&S Worldwide** Turbo Drop freefall ride. With a storyline that begins in the attraction's queue, the immersive experience finds the people of Earth tackling irreversible environmental issues, with selected individuals tasked to explore alternative habitats for humans in the universe. Once seated on the ride, guests don VR headsets and are launched into space to explore Saturn's largest moon, Titan. A sudden meteorite shower then turns the journey into a thrilling escape scenario.

•

Zero Latency has upgraded its VR attraction platform with hardware from **Microsoft** and **HP**. The revamp includes newer HP VR backpacks, Windows VR headsets and Windows VR peripheral tracking for a more cutting-edge VR experience that the company says is easier to set up, operate and maintain. Zero Latency has been a player in the out-of-home VR space since 2013 and has more than two dozen locations worldwide. The company's VR platform combines hardware and software to activate a 60-by-30-foot warehouse-scale arena that can accommodate up to eight players at once.

The first third-party content to hit Zero Latency's second-generation free-roam platform is *Scarygirl Mission Maybee* by VR and augmented reality content developer **Dark Slope** of Toronto. Based on the popular, creature-filled *Scarygirl* graphic novel and designer toy brand from artist **Nathan Jurevicius**, the experience brings players together to save the world from Dr. Maybee and his diabolical experiments.

•

Manchester, England-based **Immotion Group** has released a new live-action VR experience called *Swimming with Humpbacks*. The short film provides a rare glimpse into one of the most mysterious creatures on the planet, the giant humpback whale. Building on Immotion's VR aquatic expertise, it is the first installment in the company's Blue Ocean Aquarium series. To create it, Immotion joined forces with **Jeff Hester**, a leading free-diving cinematographer, who filmed a pod of humpback whales in the Kingdom of Tonga on migration from Antarctica during the mating season — capturing footage of a female giving birth and bonding with her calf, and young whales playing. The experience is available via the company's VR Cinematic motion pods at **ImmotionVR** locations.

•

Beyond Medusa's Gate, the second location-based VR escape room experience developed by **Ubisoft Blue Byte** of Germany, launched in May at more than 100 locations across the U.S. and Europe. The game is set in a re-creation of Ancient Greece from Ubisoft's *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* game, with two or four players teaming up for 60 minutes to find a way out of a vast Aegean coastal cave where the legendary ship of the Argonauts is anchored. To successfully escape, players must use cooperative teamwork, problem-solving skills and precise timing to solve riddles. *Beyond Medusa's Gate* builds on the success of Ubisoft's first VR escape room, *Escape the Lost Pyramid*, and continues to explore the possibilities of cooperative multiplayer VR.

•

Dave & Buster's has introduced new multiplayer VR games inspired by *Star Trek* and *Men in Black* at its North American locations. Both are co-creations of VRstudios and Salt Lake City-based independent game studio **Strange Reptile**.

Star Trek: Dark Remnant takes participants aboard the U.S.S. Galileo — an advanced stellar research vessel accompanying the Enterprise on a routine mission to evacuate an observatory in the middle of the Klingon Neutral Zone. When a neutron star collapses, leaving the Enterprise incapacitated, participants must run interference as the Klingon ships arrive. In *Men in Black: Galactic Getaway*, players are pressed into service as "accidental" MIB agents on a madcap dash to stop an alien gang from making it to their getaway spaceship. There's plenty of epic mayhem in New York and London along the way.

With different endings and variable elements throughout, both games utilize the entertainment center brand's proprietary motion simulators operated by VRstudios' VRcade Attraction Management Platform, introduced in 2018 with *Jurassic World VR Expedition*. For a limited time, Dave & Buster's has introduced VRcade Arena experiences at its Tampa location — offering two games, including a VR esport called *VRcade PowerPlay*, in a free-roaming environment.

•

Virtual Rabbids: The Big Ride is one of six new games added to the Mega Arcade at **Daytona Lagoon** in Daytona Beach, Fla. Players hop into seats and strap on **HTC Vive** headsets to ride through three premium VR experiences: *Alpine Adventure*, *Canyon Chaos* and *Holiday Hijinks*. The game accommodates guests of all ages and features twists, turns, thrills and spills in every direction with 360-degree views. Multi-axis synchronized motion seats with hi-fi audio and wind simulation add to the thrills, offering both single-player and multiplayer options.

•

In May, Munich-based **Hologate** celebrated a company milestone — announcing that its eponymous location-based VR attraction, with more than 250 installations globally, had welcomed two million visitors since its launch in 2017. Notable establishments that feature Hologate include **Andretti Indoor Karting & Games**, **Cinergy Cinemas**, **Main Event Entertainment**, **Timezone**, **Urban Air Adventure Park** and **Two Bit Circus** of Los Angeles.

Shangahi's IAAPA Expo Asia 2019 break records, opens doors

SHANGHAI, China — Connections, industry knowledge, and buying opportunities all came together during **IAAPA Expo Asia 2019** in Shanghai.

IAAPA Expo Asia 2019 (formerly Asian Attractions Expo) featured the largest trade show floor in the Expo's 21-year history as 429 companies from around the globe showcased new products and services across more than 43,600-square-feet in the **Shanghai New International Expo Centre**.

Preliminary estimates indicate 11,400 industry professionals from 80 countries, including 8,100 qualified buyers participated in IAAPA Expo Asia, demonstrating the continued growth and strength of the attractions industry throughout Asia and the rest of the world.

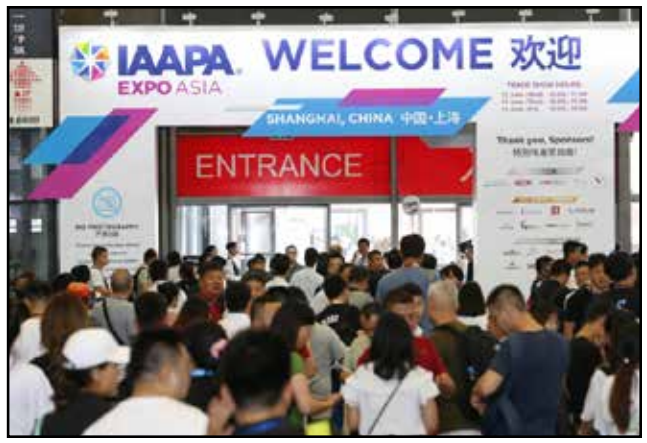
The total number of buyers in attendance represents a 25-percent increase over the 2018 Expo in Hong Kong.

Expo education conference speakers, and industry experts from 10 countries led sessions on attractions safety, operations, employee engagement, trends, best practices and more.

"IAAPA Expo Asia 2019 exceeded our expectations," said **Hal McEvoy**, IAAPA president and CEO.

"We are proud to provide IAAPA Expo Asia, the exclusive event for attractions industry professionals in this region," added **June Ko**, executive director, IAAPA Asia Pacific. "IAAPA hosts world-class events where industry professionals learn from each other and implement these new ideas at their companies, parks, and attractions."

•iaapa.org



More than 400 companies exhibited products and services, including the latest Virtual Reality technology, during the IAAPA Expo Asia 2019. The record-breaking expo was attended by 11,400 industry professionals, and featured a 25-percent increase in buyer attendance over 2018's Expo.
COURTESY IAAPA

IAAPA Expo Europe 2019 event, program schedule announced

PARIS, France — **IAAPA** invites attractions industry professionals from around the world to take part in exclusive professional networking opportunities and education programs during **IAAPA Expo Europe 2019** in Paris, France, Sept. 16-19, 2019. With more than 15,000 leisure and attractions industry professionals from more than 100 countries, IAAPA Expo Europe will occupy more than 57,400-square-feet of exhibition space at the Paris Expo Porte De Versailles.

This year's special events schedule includes an Opening Reception at **Jardin d'Acclimatation**, and a Leadership Breakfast featuring **Nicolas de Villiers**, president of **Puy du Fou**.

Indoor Entertainment Day (Sept. 16)

This event is designed for those interested in indoor leisure facilities, including indoor playgrounds, mini-golf, laser games, bowling, trampolines, escape games, and virtual reality (VR) parks. In addition, attendees will visit the unique FEC **Koezio**.

Water Park Forum (Sept. 16)

This networking educational event is designed for water park owners, operators, designers, and manufacturers and will be followed by a tour and reception at **Villages Nature Paris**, home to **Aqualagon** indoor water park.

EDU Tour to Mer de Sable and Parc Astérix (Sept. 16)

Attendees can take part in an exclusive EDUTour to two popular amusement parks located just outside of Paris — **Mer de Sable** and **Parc Astérix**.

Lunch and Learn on the French Attractions Industry (Sept. 17)

This session will feature prominent leaders of European park groups including François Fassier, director of Leisure Parks Operations at Compagnie des Alpes, and Laurent Bruloy, président of Looping Group, as they share their insights and perspectives about the attractions industry in France.

Opening Reception at Jardin d'Acclimatation (Sept.17)

Attendees will network at Jardin d'Acclimatation — an amusement park in the heart of Paris which was entirely renovated in 2018 and features 41 attractions and more than 400 animals.

Leadership Breakfast (Sept. 18)

The annual Leadership Breakfast provides senior-level attractions industry professionals the opportunity to learn and network with regional and global colleagues. Nicolas de Villiers, president of Puy du Fou, will share the successes of the unique Grand Parc and look ahead to new international expansions.

Lunch and Learn on the Middle East and Africa Attractions Industry (Sept. 18)

This session will feature Sabine Lehmann, executive director, Attractions Africa, and Bianca Sammut, general manager, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, as they discuss the latest industry developments in the Middle East and Africa.

Young Professionals and Students Forum and Reception (Sept. 18)

During this dedicated forum, attendees will learn about the many career opportunities in the global attractions industry while networking with industry veterans and leaders. A reception will follow at Le Manoir de Paris.

Future Feature: The Future of Disneyland Paris (Sept. 19)

This session will share a unique look into the future of Disneyland Paris — one of Europe's top tourist destinations.

Post-Tour to Cité du Vin, Cité de l'Huître, Puy du Fou, and Zoo de la Flèche (Sept. 19-22)

Attendees will experience unique, world-renowned French attractions during the optional post-tour.

Registration open for IAAPA Expo Give Kids The World Village events

ORLANDO — Registration is now open for the 17th Annual IAAPA International Charity Golf Tournament (bottom image), IAAPA Footprints From the Heart 5K Run/1 Mile Walk (top image), and the 10th Annual Motorcycle Ride Benefiting Give Kids The World Village. The annual events take place during IAAPA Expo 2019, raising funds for Give Kids The World (GKTW) Village — an 84-acre, nonprofit resort in Central Florida that creates magical memories for children with critical illnesses and their families from around the world. This year celebrates the 25th anniversary of the IAAPA and Give Kids The World Village partnership.
COURTESY IAAPA

SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

▸ Mobaro honored by PortAventura World — page 49 / Liner coating promotes safety at Wonderland — page 50

Amusement pier tackles new light installation

Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier upgrades tallest ride

AT: *Tim Baldwin*
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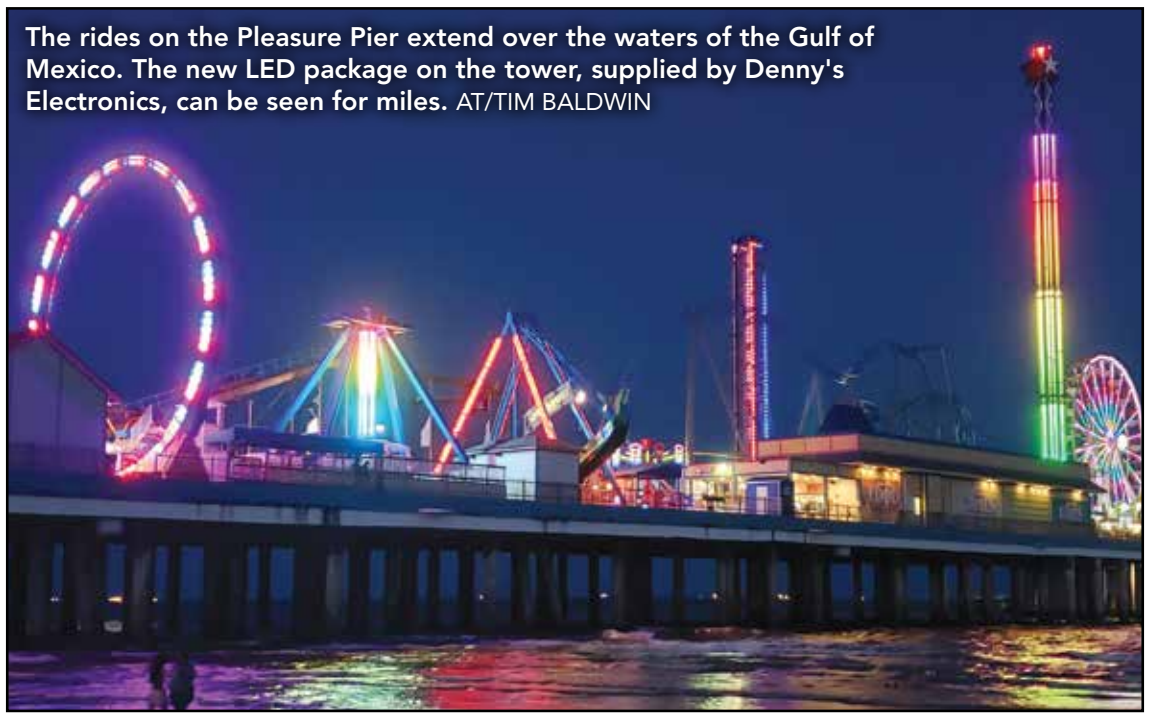

The rides on the Pleasure Pier extend over the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The new LED package on the tower, supplied by Denny's Electronics, can be seen for miles. AT/TIM BALDWIN

GALVESTON, Texas — Operating since May 2012, The **Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier** has helped solidify growth for the beach town. Owned and operated by **Landry's Inc.**, the 1,130-foot Pleasure Pier offers a colorful mix of children's rides, family rides and thrill rides, along with restaurant options for which Landry's is famous.

Hurricane Harvey's devastation in 2017 put the fledgling pier to the test. The nation watched as the Houston area was battered and flooded. The Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier not only survived, but is thriving, giving visitors year-round fun.

Recently, the Pleasure Pier's tallest attraction, Texas Star Flyer, received a major upgrade. The 200-foot **Fun Time** swing ride lets passengers soar 230 feet above the surf below, delivering both a thrilling and scenic flight. With the LED lighting makeover, the tower offers vivid color that can be seen along the Seawall Drive for miles.

Amusement Today talked to **Steven Howe,** regional director of the amusement division, to get a better picture of this process.

AT: The Galveston Island Pleasure Pier has been in operation for several years. What led to the addition of the new LED package on the swing ride this year?

Steven Howe: Hurricane Harvey caused damage to our existing light package. With the help of **Denny's Electronics**, we were able to upgrade to a new, better LED package.

With the pier and attractions already built, was there a challenge to get the lights installed with other rides in the vicinity?

Working with Denny's, our top concern was developing something that was not only safe but was also corrosion resistant for our unique environment.

What challenges do you face being on a pier?

Weather is our greatest challenge. Being on a pier, we are constantly battling against wind speeds averaging 20 mph. Our limited space also makes it a challenge for any rehab or install especially since we are open for operation 220 days a year.

How long did the installation take?

Once a final design and plan were in place, installation took approximately two weeks as we were installing between our operational schedule.

The lighting makes a huge statement from a long distance. Did returning guests notice and make comments?

Yes! We are seeing an increase in social media posts as well as the CVB and local businesses posting about our location. We're pleased.

Any other new improvements or additions on the Pier this year?

We have installed an **SBF** themed kiddie gondola wheel at the Pier and the **Downtown Aquarium** (Houston) to round out our kiddie ride selection. We have also partnered with **Blue Bell** to open a **Sweet Scoops** ice cream shop to allow our guests an indoor dining location in which to cool off and relax.

Denny's Electronics, based in Florida, has been in business since 1980. With the rush of LED advancements and demand, the company is staying busy within the amusement industry.

"In 2010 we started making LED packages for amusement rides," said **Dennis Bartosik**, owner. "We do everything from kiddie rides to big towers. We did the Gatlinburg tower, we do Ferris wheels. We probably do 40 rides a year."

Although the Texas Star Flyer was previously lit, the improvements over the original lighting are dramatic.

"They called us up and said we need new lights right away," said Bartosik. "Okay, but the first thing we have to determine is how we were going to attach the lighting. You cannot drill; you cannot weld. We don't want to affect the structural integrity. We have to clamp everything on and make sure we are clear of everything moving. We started with basic drawings, and as we moved through it, I said, 'We'll make it as easy as possible for you.' We made it easy for them to install."

Denny's Electronics sent the first parts out to test in attaching to the structure and they knew the direction was sound.

"We did it, and now we are actually going back to add another 20 feet at the top," said Bartosik. "We made the package and [the Pier] installed it themselves. But they wanted to go a little higher."

Denny's Electronics does the programming and the Pleasure Pier has control over every single light installed. "The selection of colors is amazing," said Bartosik. He said the ride has between eight to nine minutes of "program" before the patterns begin to repeat.

The sweeps carousel from which the passengers hang is also outfitted with the lighting. Bartosik reported the programming of the sweeps matches with the tower's.

Texas Star Flyer is one of 16 rides on the pier, all positioned over the Gulf of Mexico.

The original Galveston Pleasure Pier opened in the 1940s and remained immensely popular until the fury of Hurricane Carla, one of the most powerful Category 4 storms to hit the U.S., severely damaged the pier in 1961. The Flagship Hotel opened on the pier four years later and helped renew tourism. It remained for more than 40 years. Hurricane Ike in 2008 brought that chapter to a close.

The vision of Landry's Inc. was to recapture the feel and authenticity of the pier's original purpose when it developed and opened the Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier in 2012.

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Quassy Cares: employees pitch in for worthy causes

MIDDLEBURY, Conn. — Hundreds of college and high school students working at **Quassy Amusement and Waterpark** help provide memorable experiences to guests on a daily basis during the height of the park's summer season.

The same staff members have also been making a difference in local and area communities through a park-sponsored initiative entitled Quassy Cares.

"It's been an active, yet low-key, initiative here at the park for a couple of years," Quassy President **Eric Anderson** said of the program. "We've had some of our employees take part in reading programs for youngsters and this year we're doing a toy drive for less fortunate families in the state."

The toy drive at Quassy was set up this summer through the **Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association** (CRPA) in Newington as well as **Christmas Wish CT**, a charity committed to sharing the spirit of Christmas 365 days a year.

Quassy Cares joined the campaign and for each toy brought in by a park employee, Quassy Amusement and Waterpark will match the contribution.

"Quassy Cares was established to give the many young people working at the park an opportunity to make a difference in the communities that we have served for more than a century," Anderson asserted. "It's great to see them step up to the plate and become part of it."

The lakeside property, now in its 111th year, has also assisted at local soup kitchens in the past, helping to provide meals for those in need.

This spring, Quassy also put together a service cart which cruises the Middlebury Greenway — a leisure trail where the electrified trolley line that serviced the park in its early days once stood — and Quassy employees help dispose of any debris found along the paved greenway.

Some of the park's philanthropic endeavors date back for decades.

"We've long supported the Greater Waterbury Campership Fund," Anderson said of the local program which helps send underprivileged children to summer camp. "Our involvement with Campership goes back as long as any of us can remember. We've also done '3-D' fireworks on July 4th now for more than 10 years and give the proceeds from the glasses sale to a charitable organization."

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Early registration is now open!

The 2020 AIMS Safety Seminar will be held January 12-17 in Galveston, Texas, at the Galveston Island Convention Center at the San Luis Resort. AIMS has secured a special discounted hotel rate for attendees ($115 per night) at the adjacent Galveston Hilton. The setting is perfect for the AIMS Safety Seminar, with all classes being held in one central area, a great hotel in the beautiful San Luis Resort, plenty of nearby places to eat and shop, plus the added attraction of Galveston's Pleasure Pier and Schlitterbahn Waterpark nearby.

Pre-registration is now open at www.aimsintl.org. Early registration is $595 and includes all class materials, two breaks and lunch each day and an opening reception on Sunday night. Students can also sign up now for AIMS Certification Levels I-III testing in Maintenance, Operations, Ride Inspection, and Level I Aquatics. In addition, students can sign up for the following series: Leadership; Aquatics; Security; Carnival; ASTM and FEC. OSHA 10 and CPO Certifications are also offered.

Those who register and prepay will have VIP access to class selection when full registration opens in October.

For those who like to plan ahead, we recommend attendees book flights into Houston Hobby Airport (HOU), south of Houston served by Southwest and most other major airlines. From there, it is an easy shuttle ride to Galveston Island. More information can be found on our website.

The seminar is a must attend for both operators and manufacturers and suppliers who need to stay abreast on the latest trends and topics surrounding the industry's #1 priority worldwide — safety.

Scholarships to the Safety Seminar are available!

Thanks to the generosity of two great industry associations, scholarships to the AIMS Safety Seminar are available to qualified individuals.

IAAPA (The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions) provides five scholarships to the AIMS Safety Seminar in memory of **Alan Ramsay** who was an avid industry supporter and safety advocate. Applications can be found on the AIMS website at www.aimsintl.org.

OABA (the Outdoor Amusement Business Association) offers four scholarships to the AIMS Safety Seminar for OABA members who are first-time Safety Seminar attendees. One of these scholarships is dedicated in memory of **June Hardin**, owner of Wapello Fabrications, who strived for quality, safety and ASTM standards throughout her career. OABA members can contact oaba@oaba.org for more information and AIMS scholarship applications.

All AIMS Safety Seminar scholarships cover the $595 tuition fee, which includes class materials, an opening reception, all lunches and breaks, a completion certificate, and Continuing Education hours. Additional fees for testing and certification and travel expenses are not included.

Upcoming events

The AIMS International Annual Board Meeting will be held on September 5, 2019, prior to the **2019 Golden Ticket Awards**, presented by ***Amusement Today***, at **Silverwood Theme Park**.

The AIMS International Safety Award will be presented during the Golden Ticket Awards on September 7, 2019, hosted by Silverwood at the Theatre of Illusion Magic Show. The award will be presented to an individual or organization that demonstrates leadership, innovation, and foresight in improving safety in the amusement industry.

Enjoy your summer and stay SAFE!

Space for this AIMS page is provided courtesy of *Amusement Today* as a corporate partner of AIMS Intl. Content is provided by *AT* & AIMS.

Mobaro presented with award by PortAventura World

COURTESY MOBARO

TARRAGONA, Spain — **PortAventura World**, the largest family leisure and holiday destination resort in Europe, has presented **Mobaro** with a prize as the park's preferred digitalization supplier at an award show for PortAventura World's suppliers.

"PortAventura World does not want to adapt a standard market software to our very specific and precise needs," stated **Alfonso García**, technical director of PortAventura World.

"Understanding our technical language and knowing the European Standards ensures a step forward in management. It is not only about changing from paper to the digital system, it is about enhancing with all the possibilities that the digital medium offers us.

"Collaborating with a company that can also give us the experience of development in other European parks, also gives us a more open vision with a perspective of developing the project that is not limited to our knowledge only."

With the statue of acclaim neatly in place at the head office in Denmark, the Mobaro team contines working hard to enable excellent safety operations throughout the industry.

"We are extremely honoured to be acknowledged by our client like this," said **Henrik Have,** co-founder and director of Mobaro. "PortAventura World is a prime example of an attraction with extensive focus on enhancing safety, maintenance and operations procedures digitally. And we are proud to be their preferred supplier for this process because it confirms that the concept we offer has true value."

Mobaro and the Danish Association of Amusement Parks publish book

In connection with the release of the revised EN13814 standard, Danish software provider Mobaro and FFD have joined forces to inspire parks in working with the standard and published the *Best Practice Guidelines for Ride and Attraction Safety*. From a general ambition to support ride engineers, operators, and technical managers as well as general managers, FFD and Mobaro have been collaborating since 2017 through seminars and reports in an attempt to equip the industry for the revision of EN13814. This cooperation and the outcome of the meetings formed the basis of the new book. The book contains best practice guidelines, information about the new standard, guidance on guests with disabilities, advice on lockouts and tips for structuring maintenance and safety checklists. As a courtesy to the industry, Mobaro and FFD have decided to offer the publication free of charge, digital or printed, via Mobaro.com.
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Wonderland Park finds safety with liner coating

AMARILLO, Texas — Safety improvements can sometimes be found within the simplest ideas.

Paul Borchardt, owner of **Wonderland Park**, has garnered great success with **Rhino Linings**. Known for its truck bedliner material, Rhino Linings have found businesses turning to them for other applications. With a global application network of more than 2000 independently owned and operated outlets, the company has practical uses for the amusement industry as well.

"The first thing we ever used it for was our [**Huss**] Rainbow ride," said Borchardt. "We bought the ride used, and the fiberglass had little hairline cracks. We were told by a fiberglass guy to resurface it. We did and within a year we had hairline cracks again."

Borchardt approached the idea of a polyurethane bedliner as a solution. Spraying all the linings on the Rainbow ride with this material proved to be quite successful. So much so that Borchardt found other applications.

"When we built the Shoot the Chutes, we sprayed it on so that rust would not penetrate," Borchardt said. "Paint won't always get everything 100 percent, but this creates a sealed surface. We put this bedliner on the top handrail."

A following project was the park's **O.D. Hopkins** sky ride.

"We popped the seats out, sprayed them with bedliner and they looked like new," he said. "You can't puncture it."

The durability of the product has proven to last several years. The surface texture also assists in keeping people from sliding.

Borchardt has noticed that since he first investigated this process, the availability of colors has greatly expanded from when he first started.

He currently uses **Gator Guard**, another brand of truck bedliner, for on-site applications and states that there are numerous options online.

"We have used it on a few of our kiddie rides and our **Pinfari** coaster as well," said Borchardt. "We also found because it has a little texture, it didn't get as hot in the sun as bare metal."

Auto paint supply houses sell spray-on bedliner kits, so Borchardt recommends parks find one that is easy to work with or use a professional dealer for spraying bed liners.

—Tim Baldwin

The seats on the O.D. Hopkins sky lift were ideal candidates for the Rhino Linings safety treatment. The Huss Rainbow ride (right) was the first use of spray bedliners Wonderland employed. COURTESY WONDERLAND PARK

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